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THE
SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE
OF
CHRISTIAN PERFECTION
STATED AND DEFENDED:
WITH
PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATIONS AND ADVICES.
IN A SERIES OF LECTURES.

BY REV. GEORGE PECK, D. D.

ABRIDGED FROM THE AUTHOR'S LARGER WORK.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS *abridgment* of the work upon *Christian Perfection* has been prepared in accordance with the suggestions of several friends in whose judgment I repose great confidence, (among them my highly-esteemed friend *Bishop Hamline*,) for the purpose of meeting the wants of common readers. I have only left out such portions of the original work as are more particularly interesting to scholars and theologians, and would scarcely be read by any other. The present work will be found, as a book upon the great doctrine of *entire sanctification*, complete in all its parts, while it is divested of the scholastic matter which, however important to ministers and students, prevents the general circulation of the original work among the people. Though I have retained some arguments and criticisms which may be beyond the reach of several

classes of readers, yet they are so few that it is hoped they will not be deemed objectionable; and as it may be fairly presumed that they may be quite valuable to several other classes, who may not take the pains to read the larger work, they will upon the whole enhance the value of the present volume.

My great object in this publication is that of aiding in the work of "spreading Scriptural holiness over the land." And if my humble efforts shall in any measure contribute to this object, the earnest desire of my heart will be granted, and the great Author of all good shall have the praise.

G. PECK.

New-York, Feb 24, 1845.

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BISHOP HAMLINE'S RECOMMENDATION.

BROTHER ELLIOTT,*—Probably this book has obtained a circulation in some parts of the Methodist Church commensurate with its value ; but in other regions it is scarcely yet introduced among the people, and even some of the preachers have not read it. This I regret, as I am confident that the cause of vital religion would be extensively subserved by its being generally perused in a spirit of serious inquiry after truth.

No weighty Christian doctrine inculcated in our standard works, and preached by our ministers, has so signally failed to exert its proper practical effects on the church as that of Christian perfection. The doctrine of original sin is so believed by a million of our members as to have impressed on their consciences a distressing conviction of their moral depravity and their utter helplessness. The doctrine of atonement is so preached that hundreds of thousands have struggled not in vain to plunge in the fountain for sin and uncleanness. The doctrine of regeneration by the Holy Spirit is so inculcated that by far the largest portion of our members

* This notice was first published in the Western Christian Advocate.

are born of the Holy Ghost. In a word, every cardinal doctrine embraced in our creed and in our pastoral ministrations seems to be extensively and encouragingly practical, except that of Christian perfection. This last seems to be a mere speculation in the church, so far as forty-nine fiftieths of her members are concerned. Were any other important doctrine, confessedly experimental in its aim, to gain so little influence over our members, we should be thrown into a state bordering on despair, and should be in danger of concluding either that the doctrine itself is false, or that the church is almost universally skeptical in regard to it. What if not more than one in forty or fifty of our members were convicted of sin, or were regenerated and pardoned ! Yet the doctrine in question is confessed to be as practical in its aims, and as available for Christian comfort and advancement, as any doctrine of revelation. While it is practical with one among scores, it is intended to be so with every regenerated member of the church ; and *why it is not* is an important question.

Doubtless one reason is, that no other doctrine of its class is so uninfluential on the ministry. Our preachers, for the most part, do not enjoy perfect love. I believe a great number of them are seeking it ; and a much larger proportion of them than the private members enjoy it. Yet the majority of them are without it, and are striving to preach the gospel without it. But how can they preach this *doctrine* of the gospel while

it is inoperative on their own hearts? Their successful vindication of the doctrine is self-reproach. Themselves are condemned by every forcible appeal they make to the people on this subject. How can they urge others forward while they stand back? How reprove them while themselves need reproof? "Thou that sayest a man should not steal, dost *thou* steal?" is an interrogation just as suitable in this case as where outward acts or morals are concerned.

But another reason why the doctrine of Christian perfection is not more practical is the *want of information*. The doctrine has been much abused. Especially of late, the "Perfectionists" and (between them as in the extreme of error, and the Wesleyans who take their views from the Bible) a great variety of errorists have so industriously propagated opinions more or less variant (but not grossly) from the Scriptures, that it requires careful and industrious study to distinguish truth from error, and settle the mind in a clear and steadfast apprehension of the nature and the importance of this doctrine.

It is in reference to doctrinal instruction that I would call the attention of our people, and especially of our ministers, to Dr. Peck's book. It was written at a period when error was already rife, and professedly to enable the reader to detect and guard against error. Other writers, however able (and they were consummately so) to discern and expose these heresies, could not do it, because in their times the errors did not exist, or did not prevail so as to call for an ela-

borate refutation. While, therefore, we refer to earlier writers as among the most successful defenders of Christian truth that any age has produced, and expect our Wesleys and Watsons never to be excelled, we still believe that circumstances led Dr. Peck to pursue a method of authorship on Christian perfection which renders it desirable that his work should become a text book with our ministers, and be read and studied till it is as familiar to them as those works ought to be which are embraced in our "Course of Study."

I cannot explain to my younger brethren in the ministry the amount of aid they may derive from this volume as a *manual of instruction*. The work is *literary*. In its historical features it presents to the reader a variety of views entertained at different periods by Clement, Ignatius, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Macarius the Egyptian; and (passing the intermediate period from the apostolic fathers to near the Reformation) Wickliffe, Erasmus, Cudworth, Arndt, and other more modern, with some recent writers. These are examined in regard to their opinions on this topic, and some of them are shown to have held the doctrine of Christian perfection, though the most of them eschewed the name. As a brief record of opinions held by masters in theology at various periods, the book has a peculiar interest, and will prove exceedingly entertaining to the reader.

As a book of "Scripture interpretations," to which small portions of the volume are devoted,

it merits the character of a *literary work*. Texts of Scripture are critically examined when necessary, and their true signification ascertained with great judgment, in opposition to the false glosses put upon them by the oppugners of this doctrine.

The controversies which have been carried on in the church on the subject of Christian perfection are traced with great industry and skill. This is a matter of moment to those whose duty it is to explain and vindicate the doctrine in public. Not merely to entertain an inquiring or a curious mind, but as a rich preparation for the defense of this feature of the gospel, the student of theology ought to be familiar with the fifth, sixth, and on to the eleventh lecture, embracing one hundred and forty pages of the book. The information contained in this portion of the volume cannot be acquired by ordinary readers from any other source ; and it is, as we have said, important toward a liberal understanding of the theme, and as a preparation to defend the doctrine.

The work is *practical*. Several of the lectures are among the best aids we have, next to the Bible, to enable the humble seeker to attain, and the believing possessor to retain, the blessing of perfect love. The author himself has walked in this "more excellent way" for some years past ; and the experimental knowledge of this privilege of the saints was, after all, in some respects, the writer's best preparation for his task. The more practical portions of the book

are on "the way of attaining the blessing," "the motives and reasons for seeking it," "the evidences of that state," and an "address to those who possess it."

I would not write a word that would divert the attention of young brethren in the ministry from the Course of Study prescribed by the direction of the General Conference; but knowing that many of them will have time and inclination to consult other theological works, I will venture to urge on their attention this valuable treatise. I believe it supplies to ministers in our church such information as is just now exceedingly available for the exposition, defense, and spread of this doctrine. As a whole, it is worthy to be adopted as a standard work on the subject. We venture to suggest that nothing better will be supplied to our hands while the controversy on Christian perfection retains its present aspect. New heretical opinions may arise, and other adjuncts may become allied to present erroneous views on the subject, which will require additional or varied responses from the defenders of the true doctrine. But until some such changes occur, this volume is every way worthy to be considered a book of standard value on the subject of Christian perfection. This, indeed, it will always be, but especially so as *adapted to the times*.

We will suggest, (and if the excellent author should happen to see these remarks, we submit to him,) whether a smaller volume might not be prepared from this, which would be better adapted

ed to common readers, and would lead many to Christ for full redemption?*

The more practical portions of the book should be read by every member of the church. But in its present form, discussing, as it does, various theories, and recording the views and the controversies of former and later times, it will not be likely to circulate freely in families. It is now a book for ministers, though others also *might* read it with profit. I am aware that we have many excellent manuals, which contribute, more than can be estimated, to the edification of thousands; but we do not find that the multiplication of these brief treatises tends at all to divert public attention from any one of them. On the contrary, when some one of them wins the attention, and interests the heart of the reader in its glorious theme, other treatises, which had before been neglected, are sought with avidity, and read with solemn interest; and often in pursuing the subject through several of these little volumes, *faith to be cleansed* has sprung up in the soul, and the great blessing has been attained.

And there is one class of readers (we wish it were a much larger class) who never grow weary of the theme. The sanctified will be grateful to God for every well-written, Scriptural treatise on Christian perfection. For their comfort and improvement, we cannot but think that Dr. Peck may find it worth his while to prepare a small volume for general circulation,

* The present volume has been prepared in conformity with this suggestion.

while the larger one should be read and studied by all who should minister this grace to others. As I write, my thoughts wander to those regions where many pious and talented pastors whom I met and communed with during the last summer are now toiling for their blessed Master. "We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company." I am sure that to them I may venture especially to reiterate the commendations I have here passed on a volume which has been a help to my own knowledge and enjoyments since we bowed together before the Lord, and felt that his presence overshadowed us.

L. L. HAMLINE.

THE
SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE
OF
CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

LECTURE I.

WE MUST LEAVE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES.

“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit” Heb. vi, 1-3.

THE Epistle to the Hebrews is suited to the character of such as had been really converted from Judaism, and had experimentally “received the knowledge of the truth.” In the opening of the third chapter, the apostle calls those he addresses “holy brethren,” a designation which could with no propriety be given “the unbelieving Jews,” as is supposed by Dr. Macknight, but which supposes that they had

in a good sense "been once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift."

This position is clearly taken in the language of the text which I make the foundation of the present lecture. It is assumed that the persons addressed had once "laid the foundation of repentance from dead works," &c.

In this lecture my object shall be, *first*, to speak of the principles we are required to leave; and *secondly*, to show in what sense they are to be left.

I. I invite attention to the principles which we are to leave.

These principles are here given in six particulars, embracing three classes. Under each class we have two intimately related-principles. The first class I shall call *inward affections*, embracing, 1. "Repentance from dead works;" and 2. "Faith toward God." The second, *ceremonies*: 1. "Baptism;" and 2. "Laying on of hands." The third, *future retribution*: 1. "The resurrection of the dead;" and 2. "Eternal judgment."

"Repentance from dead works" is repentance of all those *works* which expose the sinner to eternal death; hence called νεκρων εργα *works of death*. "Faith toward God," is that faith in the being, attributes, and government of God, upon which all rational religion must be founded. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. xi, 6. "Baptisms" may refer to the outward ordinance, and the in-

ward grace, called the baptism of the Spirit. "The laying on of hands" was practiced among the Jews on several occasions, and was used by Christ and the apostles in solemnly dedicating persons to God—or consecrating them to the work of the ministry; and was accompanied by prayer for the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the subject. "The resurrection of the dead," followed by the "judgment," called "eternal," because its consequences or awards are permanent and unchangeable.

We are not bound to suppose this analysis of the system of doctrines first promulgated and received, to be perfect. The generals do indeed seem, at least by implication, to cover the whole ground of religious truth; for every part of religion relates either to the regulation of the heart, the conduct of the life, or to the future state. But under these general principles we have a part of the details for the whole: and particulars, which were made matters of special instruction, are introduced under each head as specimens.

The *της αρχης του Χριστου λογον*, *the beginning of the word of Christ*, is the same as *της αρχης των λογιων του Θεου*, *the beginning of the words, or oracles of God*. Chap. v, 12. I give this rendering, as more literal, though the common version is a tolerable expression of the sense of the original.

It seems, in chap. v, 12, to be more than insinuated that these Hebrew Christians had not made that proficiency in *first principles* which

their privileges afforded reason to expect—that they had been dull scholars, and deserved reproof for their tardiness in becoming acquainted with the great elements of Christian knowledge. But instead of giving them a long time to remedy this deficiency—instead of leaving them still longer in these elements, which it seems they had as yet but imperfectly learned—he urges them on to higher attainments. The great apostle is not of that class of teachers who permit their pupils to be satisfied with themselves when they have but imperfectly learned their lesson, or suffer them to linger and doze over their task. His motto is, *Onward*. He endeavors to arouse to action the dilatory, by pointing them to the vast heights which are before them, and which are to be ascended before they can be “perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” The method pursued is, with almost the same breath to rebuke present defectiveness, and spur on to higher attainments; to chide past negligence, and to urge on to future fidelity and diligence.

II. Let us inquire in what sense we are required to *leave* “the principles of the doctrine of Christ.”

Commentators widely differ as to the sense which should be attached to the words of the apostle in this place. The learned Peirce paraphrases the passage thus: “Wherefore I shall waive to discourse concerning the first and more obscure discoveries that were made of Christ under the old dispensation, and shall go on to

offer you somewhat more solid and fit for you as adult persons, rather than feed you with milk as children.”* In this view agree Whitby, Hammond, Macknight, Bloomfield, and others. But Professor Stuart, in accordance with the views of Dr. A. Clarke and some other learned critics, considers the language as “hortatory,” and gives us the following very rational paraphrase upon it:—“Wherefore,” that is, since, “τελειοι [*the perfect*] only are capable of στερεα τροφη, *solid food*, viz., of receiving, digesting, and duly appreciating, the higher and more difficult doctrines of Christianity, and since ye are yet but νηπιοι, [*babes*,] although ye ought to be advanced in Christian knowledge, if regard be had to the long time that ye have professed the Christian religion, (v. 12–14;) διο, *therefore*, it becomes you to quit this state of immaturity, this νηπιότητα, [*infancy*,] and advance to a mature state, to τελιότητα,” *perfection*. The meaning of αφεντες, *leaving*, in this place, he thinks to be “quitting the mere initial state of pupilage, advancing forward to a maturer state of instruction and knowledge; or, making such advances that it shall be unnecessary to repeat *elementary* instruction in the principles of Christianity.”†

We are not to understand “*leaving*” in the sense of abandoning, as prejudicial or useless. As say the Westminster divines: “Not that

* See paraphrases and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul.

† See Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, *in loc*.

we are to neglect the first principles of religion, but to labor for a greater measure of knowledge. 2 Pet. iii, 18. It is as if he had said, Seeing it is a shame always to be babes, let us, as men grown, seek after stronger meat. *Leaving*—Not casting them for ever behind our backs, suffering them to slip quite out of our memories; but not staying *only* upon these, let us go forward, as good travelers, in our Christian race.”*

First, then, we do not understand that we are admonished by the apostle in these words to cease from holding these principles, as parts of the gospel.

They are essential principles in the system, which no state of Christian knowledge or experience can dispense with. Were they to be set down among Jewish rites, they might now be considered as superseded—as constituting a part of a system which is “waxing old, and is ready to vanish away.” But they are called “the doctrine of Christ,” a designation never given to the shadowy rites of the Jewish dispensation. Macknight says, “I agree with Peirce in thinking ‘the principles of Christ’ mean the principles of the doctrine of Christ as contained in the writings of Moses and the prophets.”† And in accordance with this view he translates the passage, “dismissing the discourse of the principles of Christ,” &c. But both the translation and the paraphrase, as I

* Assembly’s Annotations, *in loc.*

† Macknight on the Epistles, *in loc.*

conceive, greatly weaken the force of the passage, and give it a wrong sense. For "the principles of the doctrine of Christ, as contained in the writings of Moses and the prophets," are not to be abandoned or dismissed. All of the law and the prophets that is morally and universally obligatory is so far from being left in the background by Christ and the apostles, that it is brought forward and considered a part of the gospel, and is indeed taught and enforced as all-important, and to be dispensed with under no circumstances.

Secondly. Nor do we understand, by these words of the apostle, that we may cease to practice upon these principles. Can we ever cease to repent of our dead works, or to believe in God; or to admit the importance and acknowledge the obligations of our baptism; or to recognize the gift of the Holy Ghost in answer to prayer; or to act with a constant reference to the resurrection of the just and the unjust, and the eternal judgment that is to follow? These principles are identical with Christianity itself, and cannot be put away without repudiating the whole system. As matters of practice, they must be imbodied in the lives of all the members of Christ's mystical body, while their probation continues.

Thirdly. Nor may we suppose ourselves authorized from this passage to leave the work of inculcating these principles. Wherever the ambassadors of Christ come, they open their commission by testifying "repentance toward God,

and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ;” by calling on men to “repent and be baptized for the remission of sins ;” assuring them that upon these terms they “shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” A specimen of grouping several of these principles together in a few words we have in the sermon of Peter, delivered after the cure of the lame man at the Beautiful gate of the temple. Says he, “Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord ; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you : whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Acts iii, 19–21. Here the duty of repentance, the privilege of pardon, and the refreshings of the Holy Spirit, are connected with the coming of Christ, and the restitution of all those things spoken by the prophets, or the final retribution. These principles are, indeed, far more frequently insisted upon than the higher attainments of grace ; doubtless for the reason that the great mass of men still “lie in the wicked one”—have not so much as begun to lay “the foundation of repentance from dead works.” We must, then, not neglect to teach these principles in the abstract. We must bring them out fully and frequently. We must enforce them plainly and powerfully. They must have a prominence in all our public and private instructions, such as they had of

old in the discourses and epistles of the holy apostles.

But there is still a sense, an important sense, in which we must leave these "first principles."

We must not rest in them. Being mere elements, we must not suppose that they constitute the whole system. From the abstract we must proceed to consider them, and act upon them in the concrete; that is, in their connections and relations with other parts of the perfect whole. For illustration: We must leave these "first principles," as the pupil leaves the alphabet, when he is brought to the process of combining letters into syllables, and syllables into words, and of words constructing sentences, and of sentences making a discourse. We must leave them, as the architect leaves the foundation, and proceeds to erect upon it his superstructure. We must leave them, as the mathematician leaves first principles, and proceeds to the construction of his demonstration.

To what purpose would the pupil have learned the elements of language if he should rest in them? Where the use of continuing to con them over, without proceeding any further? What benefit would result from the labor and expense of laying the best foundation, if it remain unappropriated—if no building be reared upon it? How long might the mathematician occupy himself in ascertaining the axioms of science, without coming at a single valuable result? And what advantage will accrue to us,

or to the world, from our acquiring the mere elements of Christianity, without reducing them to practice, pushing them out to their ulterior results, and connecting them with the higher principles of a spiritual life ?

There are, indeed, no stationary positions in religion. We shall never, until we get to heaven, and probably not even then, be able to say, We have reached the summit of excellence, and can advance no further. Much less can we consistently take such a position upon our first entrance into the school of Christ. Then especially should we feel that we have but just commenced our course—that we have only started in a race which is to be prosecuted with vigor and perseverance to the end. And the sooner we leave mere elements the better. The great law of habit constantly operates. If we settle down contentedly in our first attainments, every moment's delay there fixes us the more firmly, and renders it the more difficult for us to strike our tents and move onward to greener pastures and more fruitful fields. We every day become better and better satisfied with our attainments, until we lose the things which we had wrought ; and it may be said in truth, that having begun in the spirit, we are made perfect in the flesh.

Any foundation, be it ever so firmly laid, if left unoccupied, will very soon go to decay, and finally become a mass of ruins. So the mere elements of Christian character will soon be lost, unless we proceed to advanced ground. To a church which had not been sufficiently

mindful of this important truth, the great apostle gives a most striking admonition: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whom Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain." Gal. iii, 1-4. Again he says, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." And again: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you." Chap. v, 4, 7, 8. And Christ says to the angel of the church of Ephesus, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." Rev. ii, 1, 4, 5. The talent which the servant hid in a napkin was soon "taken away from him," and he "cast into outer darkness." Matt. xxv, 28, 30.

From all this we see most clearly, that to come to a pause at the commencement of the course is equal to a retreat. It is at least the commencement of a retrograde movement. It has often been said, with great truth, that there

is no standing still in religion. Like the vessel in the current without sail or oars, we necessarily glide down the stream. Resting is the commencement of a fatal decline in practical godliness, and continued in, will finally result in apostasy and ruin. If, then, we do not wish to end in the flesh—to fall from grace—to lose our first love—to be deprived of the talent committed to us—to have the candlestick removed out of its place—and finally to be cast into outer darkness—we must “leave the things which are behind, and go forward to those which are before.”

It can be scarcely necessary further to prove that defection is always the result of resting in low attainments. The position is sustained by the general tenor of Scripture instruction and warning directed to the church in her militant state. We are clearly told by our Lord, that it was “while men slept” that the devil “sowed” his “tares.” And it is in accordance with too much sad experience, that the spirit of quietude and self-complacency which too often follows the first profession of religion, is the beginning of a sad decline even in elementary principles. An old father says, “The soul’s idling time is the devil’s working time.” And quite too many, by sad experience have proved the truth of the maxim.

How fully, then, should all who have been converted and inducted into the church—who have entered their names among the sacramental hosts of God’s elect—be impressed with the

fact that the race is yet to be run, that the battle is yet to be fought! It does not become them, having just "put on the harness," to "boast as him that putteth it off." Nay, brethren, do not be satisfied with your novitiate. Leave "first principles," and press onward and upward in the name of the Lord. To pause is to go back—and to go back is to perish.

From what has been advanced, the following reflections seem to be naturally suggested:—

1. That a portion—alas! but too large a portion—of those who have embraced religion, occupy ground, to say the least, extremely doubtful.

How common a case it is for persons to rest satisfied with their first small attainments in religion, and never to think of anything further! They have passed through a distressing struggle with guilt and fear, and have obtained peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The world, the flesh, and the devil, held them long in bondage, until by the power of grace, after a dubious conflict, perhaps of long continuance, they were enabled to overcome. 'They now rejoice in God, and praise his delivering goodness. 'Their language is, "O Lord, I will praise thee; for though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me!" Thus far all is well. But how often is this state of mind succeeded by a state of lukewarmness and spiritual apathy! How many thank God for the first victory they have gained, and then act as though they considered

their enemies all slain! Falling asleep in the lap of Delilah, they awake no more until totally shorn of their strength. If they do not, in theory, embrace the soul-paralyzing doctrine, that a Christian's hopes are the brightest, and his joys the purest and strongest, the first few days or weeks of his spiritual existence, they do act as though they had little or nothing higher to expect in this world. They thank God they are converted, and there they rest. Having beaten the enemy at the first onset, they leave him to retire to his stronghold and fortify himself, or prepare for another attack, while they are engaged in feasting upon the spoils of victory.

When Hannibal had defeated the Romans upon the plains of Italy, nothing was wanted but a determined spirit of perseverance to give him the possession of Rome itself. But, flushed with their victory, the Carthagenians spent the time in rioting on the spoils which should have been employed in pushing their conquests. In the mean time the Romans collected their whole strength, and soon proved more than a match for their terrible invaders. Our foe is wily and powerful, and we can only maintain our ground against him by pushing forward our conquests. When he is beaten at one point, he fortifies another; and when he detects some weakness in our fortifications, he resumes the attack, and often with fatal effect.

How many, or how few, among the mass of those who profess the religion of Christ, and

who have given good evidence of a change of heart, are in this perilous state, I do not pretend to say. But that this is the condition of multitudes there is too much reason to believe. But a transient view of the present aspect of the Christian churches will be quite sufficient to awaken the deepest concern in the thoughtful mind. Where is that onward and aggressive movement—where that holy violence—where that pressing forward, which characterizes the kingdom of Christ as portrayed in the inspired volume? We boast of our peace: it is well if it is not the peace of the dead. We glory in our triumphs: well, indeed, if they be not triumphs over an artful foe, who has only given a little ground, that he may get us more fully into his power. The ocean is often still—beautifully smooth, just before a storm; and the stagnant pool is none the less pestiferous because it is not agitated by the tempest. Jehovah says, “Wo to them that are at ease in Zion!” Arise, brethren, in the name of God, for “this is not your rest.” Leave “first principles.” Cast your eye up the heights of Zion, and see what glories are before you. Make your mark high. Content not yourselves with the little you have experienced and done. “There is much land yet to be possessed.” Stay not on the border of the spiritual Canaan, like “the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh,” while the best of the promised land is on the other side of Jordan, and is as free for you as for others.

2. Remaining in a state of mere pupilage while we have the means for higher attainments, is dishonorable to us, and offensive to God.

How cutting is the reproof which the apostle administers to the Hebrew converts for their low attainments! "For when," says he, "for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God." Heb. v, 12. Small progress under great privileges is a grievous fault. The scholar who has time, and books, and excellent instructors, and yet learns nothing, is soon given up as incorrigible. He soon loses caste, is degraded, is censured by his friends, and is condemned by all. The man of business who, by negligence or prodigality, loses his customers, and so suffers his business to run down, is despised, and, when the pinching hand of poverty seizes him, is unpitied.

And what shall be said of us, if we fail to learn under the instructions of our heavenly Teacher, and, with the plenitude of means within our reach for "laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come," remain in a state of spiritual destitution and wretchedness? Has God any honors for us? Shall we have a competency when winter comes? Will we hear from the mouth of the Judge in the day of Jesus Christ, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?" Or will it be said in thunder tones,

“Take the unprofitable servant, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth?” Let those who live in the bosom of the church—who enjoy the light of truth shining in its brightness—see that their improvement is, at least measurably, proportionable to the means put into their hands. Much light, and an abundance of spiritual influences, connected with no progress, or very slow progress, in religion is shameful. Where, my brethren, ought we now to have been, in view of what God has done for us? We should have been men and women, but we are mere children. We might have been giants, but, alas! we are mere dwarfs. How can we look our Judge in the face, when he shall say, “Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward?” O! for a holy ambition to do something like what we ought to do before we die! When will we be wise? when properly awake to our true interests? When shall we seek, above everything, “the honor that cometh from God?”

3. Leaving “first principles,” and going on to perfection, is the only way to be secure against final and total apostasy.

This position is most clearly implied in the course of argumentation pursued by the apostle in the text and its connections. He urges the Hebrew Christians to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and to go on to perfection, by the consideration that it is impossible to renew those unto repentance who, after be-

ing once enlightened, &c., shall fall away;—taking it for granted, as a matter of course, that those who do not regard his admonitions, and leave the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, &c., will “fall away.” Is not this a terrible consideration? Says Richard Allen: “As to believers, who have already obtained grace, my word to them is, Follow on toward perfection, in fear of falling back from, or walking unworthy of, that grace wherein you stand.”*

I know, brethren, you do not intend to apostatize, and so pour contempt upon the cause of Christ; nothing is further from your thoughts. You mean to “hold fast whereunto you have attained, that no one take your crown.” But how do you carry out this good purpose? Is it in God’s appointed way? In what does your safety consist? If in the strength of your own resolutions, you will soon be overcome. God must sustain you by constant supplies of grace, or you are without defense. On what terms has he promised to do this? On condition of your remaining stationary? Not at all. The apostle Peter tells us: “And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor

* Wesley’s Christian Library, vol. xviii, p. 474.

unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." 2 Peter i, 5-9.

So then, according to the apostle, the way to be fruitful "in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"—to be prosperous, safe, and happy in our Christian course—is to "*add* to our faith, virtue," &c. And those who "lack these things," that is, do not proceed to "*add*," &c., are "blind—and have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins." The note of Dr. A. Clarke upon this passage sets the subject in a clear and strong light:—

"*But he that lacketh these things*—He, whether Jew or Gentile, who professes to have faith in God, and has not added to that FAITH *fortitude, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and universal love, is blind; his understanding is darkened, and cannot see afar off; μυωπαζιον, shutting his eyes against the light, winking, not able to look truth in the face; nor to behold that God whom he once knew was reconciled to him: and thus it appears he is willfully blind, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins; has, at last, through his non-improvement of the grace which he received from God, his faith ceasing to work by love, lost the evidence of things not seen; for having grieved the Holy Spirit, by not showing forth the virtues of him who called him into his marvelous light, he has lost the*

testimony of his sonship ; and thus, darkness and hardness having taken the place of *light* and *filial confidence*, he first calls all his former experience into doubt, and questions whether he had not put enthusiasm in the place of religion. By these means his darkness and hardness increase, his memory becomes indistinct and confused ; till, at length, he forgets the work of God on his soul ; next denies it ; and at last asserts, that the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins is impossible ; and that no man can be saved from sin in this life. Indeed, some go so far as to deny the Lord that bought them ; to renounce Jesus Christ having made atonement for them ; and finish their career of apostasy by utterly denying his Godhead. Many cases of this kind have I known ; and they are all the consequence of believers not continuing to be workers together with God, after they had experienced his pardoning love.”*

What stronger motives, then, can possibly be presented to induce us to leave the beginning and advance rapidly toward the completion of our Christian character ? It is our honor, our glory, and our crown of rejoicing. It is our safety against the incursions of the grand adversary of our souls, and the return of our lusts to their former dominion. It is our only security against utter apostasy, the dismal gulf of infidelity, and the pit of hell ! What say you then, brethren. The young—who have but just entered upon their Christian course—who have

* Commentary on the place.

scarcely yet learned the elements of the system: and the old, who have made but little progress toward perfection—who, though you have been for many years members of the church, are yet mere children in experience; “having need of milk, and not of strong meat;”—is it not high time for you all to cast your eyes over the length and breadth of the land? to go on and drive out the enemies of the Lord? Rest is inglorious—protracted childhood criminal. O for a shaking among the dry bones of the valley!—for a mighty resurrection in the church—for a simultaneous onward movement, on the part of those who have enrolled their names with the army of Israel! Spirit of the Holy One! come into our hearts, and dwell there for evermore!

LECTURE II.

THE NATURE OF PERFECTION.

“Let us go on unto perfection.” Hebrews vi, 1.

IN the preceding lecture I endeavored to show that we must leave elementary principles, and the state of novitiates, and advance. In this my object shall be to exhibit the mark at which we are to aim. We must “go on unto perfection.”

And that we may not act at random, or fight as those who beat the air, it will be necessary,

if possible, to have definite views of that perfection which we are to seek. I shall consequently, in the first place, attempt to ascertain the meaning of the term perfection, as it is to be understood in the text, and in similar passages. Several commentators suppose that by perfection, here, the apostle means the higher degrees of knowledge. Macknight says: "The apostle calls the knowledge of the doctrines and promises of the gospel, as typically set forth in the covenant with Abram, and darkly expressed in the figures and prophecies of the law, *τελειοτης*, *perfection*, either in allusion to the Greeks, who termed the complete knowledge of their mysteries *τελειοτης*, or *τελειωσις*, *perfection*; or in allusion to what he had said chap. v, 14, that strong meat belongs to *τελειων*, full-grown men."

Perfection here unquestionably implies an advanced state of knowledge; but this is but a small part of what I conceive to be embraced. I much prefer the thorough views of Dr. A. Clarke to those of Macknight and others who agree with him. This distinguished critic paraphrases the passage thus: "'*Let us go on to perfection*'—Let us never rest till we are adult Christians; till we are saved from all sin, and are filled with the spirit and power of Christ."

In endeavoring to have right conceptions of the doctrine of *Christian perfection*, we may be somewhat aided by a correct understanding of the simple idea of perfection in the abstract. Perfection signifies *completeness*. Hooker says,

“We count those things perfect which want nothing requisite for the end whereunto they were instituted.” So any thing that is *complete in its kind* is *perfect*. But in order to a full understanding of the subject, we must inquire into its elements. These I shall present as they are found in the Scriptures, and in the writings of eminent theologians.

In the first place, then, let us inquire, What light do we derive from the Scriptures upon the subject?

I need not attempt to prove, that perfection of some sort is held out in the Bible as an attainable state. No one will deny this. The simple announcement of the text, which I make my motto, is sufficient warrant for the assumption at present. And it may now be taken for granted that it is the *thing* we mean by *Christian perfection*, and not the name, that is deemed objectionable; for it is difficult to perceive how serious and intelligent Christians can object to *language* so strongly sanctioned by Scripture use. What, then, is the perfection held up in the Scriptures as attainable and obligatory?

If man were mere matter, his highest perfection might consist in his physical organization, the proportions of his various parts, and the beauty of his form: if he were a mere animal, then his highest excellence might consist in the perfection of his animal functions—sensations, instincts, &c.: if he were merely an intellectual being, his greatest glory would be in the strength and quickness of his intellectual facul-

ties. But as he is a moral being, his highest perfection must consist in likeness to his great Author in his moral character—it must consist in “the beauty of holiness.” To Christian perfection, then, we must necessarily attach the idea of *holiness*, or *sanctification to the fullest extent of which we are capable in our present state*:—what St. Paul means by being sanctified *wholly*, (1 Thess. v, 23,) and by standing *complete in all the will of God*. Col. iv, 12.

Sanctification is the renovation of the heart ; but the term, unqualified, does not always, or even generally, imply what we mean by Christian perfection. Justification implies pardon. But simultaneously with the sinner’s being taken into favor, he is born again, or regenerated. This is a real change wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God. And those thus changed or regenerated are often, in the writings of the apostles, called holy, and sanctified. Mr. Wesley says, “The term *sanctified* is continually applied by St. Paul to all that were justified. By this term alone he rarely, if ever, means, ‘saved from all sin ;’” and “that, consequently, it is not proper to use it in that sense, without adding the word *wholly*, *entirely*, or the like.”*

Hence, to speak of a sanctified state simply as a state of entire freedom from sin, would be, in the view of Mr. Wesley, to depart from the general usage of St. Paul. It would be equally

* Plain Account of Christian Perfection, 18mo., pp. 51, 52.

foreign from the views both of St. Paul and Mr. Wesley, to speak of those who are not sanctified *wholly* as in a state of *damning* sin. For they are justified and born anew, and consequently adopted into God's family. And though their sanctification may not be complete, they have the promise of eternal life, and of course have the pledge of complete sanctification, if they should be cut off by death in that state. It is most absurd to suppose that a justified soul can be lost, without having forfeited his justification by backsliding.

Mr. Wesley, in many places, speaks in very strong terms of the blessedness of a state of justification, and applies the language of Scripture to that state, which certainly implies a high degree of triumph over the lusts of the flesh. The following may be considered as specimens of a large class of passages which might be quoted :—

“An immediate and constant fruit of this faith whereby we are born of God, a fruit which can in no wise be separated from it, no, not for an hour, is power over sin ;—power over outward sin of every kind ; over every evil word and work ; for wheresoever the blood of Christ is thus applied, it ‘ purgeth the conscience from dead works ;’—and over inward sin ; for it purifieth the heart from every unholy desire and temper.”*

Again :—

“Now, the word of God plainly declares,

* Works, vol. i, p. 155.

that even those who are justified, who are born again in the lowest sense, 'do not continue in sin;' that they cannot 'live any longer therein, Rom. vi, 1, 2; that they are 'planted together in the likeness of the death' of Christ, verse 5; that their 'old man is crucified with him,' the body of sin being destroyed, so that henceforth they do not serve sin; that being dead with Christ, they are free from sin, ver. 6, 7; that they are 'dead unto sin, and alive unto God,' verse 11; that 'sin hath no more dominion over them,' who are 'not under the law, but under grace;' but that these, 'being free from sin, are become the servants of righteousness,' ver. 14, 18."*

And again:—

"Is every man, as soon as he believes, a new creature, sanctified, pure in heart? Has he then a new heart? Does Christ dwell therein? And is he a temple of the Holy Ghost?—All these things may be affirmed of every believer, in a true sense. Let us not, then, contradict those who maintain it. Why should we contend about words?"†

The state of the justified is here represented to be truly elevated and glorious. Sin does not reign—is suspended, is crucified. And yet, by all these strong expressions, and by the application, to a merely justified state, of so many striking passages upon the subject of the triumphs of grace, from the sacred writers, this great and good man did not intend to be under-

* Works, vol. i, p. 359. † Ibid., vol. v, p. 205.

stood to teach that no inbred sin remains in the justified. Let these passages be compared with his sermon on "Sin in Believers."* Here he teaches that *sin may exist where it does not reign*, and pronounces the contrary opinion "absolutely contrary to all experience, all Scripture, all common sense." His views upon this subject are very clearly expressed in his sermon on Eph. ii, 8, as follows:—

"But we are at present concerned only with that salvation which the apostle is directly speaking of. And this consists of two general parts, justification and sanctification.

"Justification is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins; and, what is necessarily implied therein, our acceptance with God. The price whereby this hath been procured for us, (commonly termed the meritorious cause of our justification,) is the blood and righteousness of Christ; or, to express it a little more clearly, all that Christ hath done and suffered for us, till he 'poured out his soul for the transgressors.' The immediate effects of justification are, the peace of God, a 'peace that passeth all understanding,' and a 'rejoicing in hope of the glory of God,' 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

"And at the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, sanctification begins. In that instant we are born again, born from above, born of the Spirit: there is a *real* as well as a *relative* change. We are inwardly renewed

* Works, vol. i, p. 108.

by the power of God. We feel 'the love of God shed abroad in our heart, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us,' producing love to all mankind, and more especially to the children of God; expelling the love of the world, the love of pleasure, of ease, of honor, of money; together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil temper; in a word, changing the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, into 'the mind which was in Christ Jesus.'

"How naturally do those who experience such a change imagine that all sin is gone; that it is utterly rooted out of their heart, and has no more any place therein! How easily do they draw that inference, 'I *feel* no sin; therefore I *have* none: it does not *stir*; therefore it does not *exist*: it has no *motion*; therefore it has no *being*!'

"But it is seldom long before they are undeceived, finding sin was only suspended, not destroyed. Temptations return, and sin revives; showing it was but stunned before, not dead. They now feel two principles in themselves, plainly contrary to each other; 'the flesh lust-
ing against the Spirit;' nature opposing the grace of God. They cannot deny that, although they still feel power to believe in Christ, and to love God; and, although his 'Spirit [still] witnesses with their spirits, that they are children of God;' yet they feel in themselves sometimes pride or self-will, sometimes anger or unbelief. They find one or more of these frequently *stirring* in their heart, though not con-

quering ; yea, perhaps, ‘ thrusting sore at them that they may fall ;’ but the Lord is their help.

“ How exactly did Macarius, fourteen hundred years ago, describe the present experience of the children of God ! ‘ The unskillful, [or unexperienced,] when grace operates, presently imagine they have no more sin. Whereas they that have discretion cannot deny, that even we who have the grace of God may be molested again : for we have often had instances of some among the brethren, who have experienced such grace as to affirm that they had no sin in them ; and yet, after all, when they thought themselves entirely freed from it, the corruption that lurked within was stirred up anew, and they were well nigh burned up.’

“ From the time of our being born again the gradual work of sanctification takes place. We are enabled, ‘ by the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the body,’ of our evil nature ; and as we are more and more dead to sin, we are more and more alive to God. We go on from grace to grace, while we are careful to ‘ abstain from all appearance of evil,’ and are ‘ zealous of good works,’ as we have opportunity of doing good to all men ; while we walk in all his ordinances blameless, therein worshiping him in spirit and in truth ; while we take up our cross, and deny ourselves every pleasure that does not lead us to God.

“ It is thus that we wait for entire sanctification ; for a full salvation from all our sins,—

from pride, self-will, anger, unbelief; or, as the apostle expresses it, 'go on to perfection.' ”*

Nothing can be clearer than this statement of the case, and I might add, nothing more consonant with the experience of all who have been brought into the divine favor through faith in Christ. The soul is regenerated, but is not wholly sanctified—sin is subdued, but is not wholly taken away—the body of sin is nailed to the cross, but still occasionally struggles. The work of sanctification begun is yet to be completed. In this state the exhortation, “Let us go on to perfection,” is urged upon us, and should come home with all the weight of divine authority.

After this introduction, I shall proceed to the particular consideration of the main point, viz., *What is the perfection to which we are to press forward?* I have already said, it implies *complete holiness, or entire sanctification*. Let us, then, endeavor to analyze the great subject of entire sanctification, and try to ascertain what are its constituent principles, or elements.

“The word sanctify,” says Dr. A. Clarke, “has two meanings:—1. It signifies to consecrate, to separate from earth and common use, and to devote and dedicate to God and his service. 2. It signifies to make holy or pure.”†

The following is from Mr. Watson's Biblical and Theological Dictionary:—“*Sanctification*, that work of God's grace by which we are renewed after the image of God, set apart for his

* Works, vol. i, pp. 385, 386. † Theology, p. 182.

service, and enabled to die unto sin and live unto righteousness. Sanctification is either of nature, whereby we are renewed after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, (Eph. iv, 24 ; Col. iii, 19,) or of practice, whereby we die unto sin, have its power destroyed in us, cease from the love and practice of it, hate it as abominable, and live unto righteousness, loving and studying good works. Tit. ii, 11, 12. Sanctification comprehends all the graces of knowledge, faith, repentance, love, humility, zeal, patience, &c., and the exercise of them in our conduct toward God or man. Gal. v, 22-24 ; 1 Peter i, 15, 16 ; Matt. v, vi, vii. Sanctification in this world must be complete ; the whole nature must be sanctified, all sin must be utterly abolished, or the soul can never be admitted into the glorious presence of God ; (Heb. xi, 14 ; 1 Peter i, 15 ; Rev. xxi, 27 ;) yet the saints, while here, are in a state of spiritual warfare with Satan and his temptations, with the world and its influence. 2 Cor. ii, 11 ; Gal. v, 17, 24 ; Rom. vii, 23 ; 1 John ii, 15, 16."

Mr. Baxter says, "The essence of holiness, as denominated from the object, is the consent to the three articles of the covenant of grace :—

1. That we give up ourselves to God, as our God and reconciled Father in Jesus Christ.
2. That we give up ourselves to Jesus Christ, as our Redeemer and Saviour, to recover us, reconcile us, and bring us unto God.
3. That we give up ourselves to the Holy Ghost as our

Sanctifier, to guide and illuminate us, and perfect the image of God upon us, and prepare us for glory.

“The essence of sanctification, as denominated from its opposite objects, is nothing but our renunciation and rejection of the flesh, the world, and the devil; of pleasures, profits, and honors, as they would be preferred before God, and draw us to forsake him.

“The essence of sanctification, as denominated from our faculties, which are the subject of it, is nothing but this preferring of God, and grace, and glory, above the said pleasures, profits, and honors. 1. By the estimation of our understandings. 2. By the resolved habituate choice of our wills. 3. And in the bent and drift of our endeavors in our conversations. In these three acts, as upon the first three objects, and against the other three objects, lieth all that is essential to sanctification, and that we should judge of our sincerity, and title to salvation by, as I before showed.”*

Further and more fully to illustrate the subject, I shall now proceed to a more extended view of the Scripture doctrine of entire sanctification.

The subject is most generally presented by the apostle as embracing two parts:—1. The death or destruction of sin; and, 2. The spiritual resurrection, or the life of grace. This is clearly set forth by St. Paul, thus, “What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin, that

* Practical Works, Orme’s edition, vol. xvi, p. 202.

grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. vi, 1-11.

In this passage the two great principles presented fully to view are, the death of the body of sin, and the restoration of the soul to a new and spiritual life.

And when the apostle urges the subject of entire sanctification upon the Corinthian church, he gives us the same two-fold view of it: "Having therefore," says he, "these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthi-

ness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. vii, 1. We are first to seek to eradicate our filthiness; and secondly, to perfect holiness.

1. Then sanctification, in its earliest stages, implies the subjugation of the body of sin; and *complete* sanctification implies its entire destruction.

The members of this body of sin are, anger, covetousness, pride, unbelief, hypocrisy, envy, concupiscence, &c.*

St. Paul groups together a large family of these evils, under the designation of "works of the flesh." These are, "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like;" and says, "Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Gal. v, 19-21.

I here consider the body of sin, with its members, unsubdued and unbridled, as it is in the minds of the unregenerate: originating in the senses, conceptions, and imagination; nourished by the desires, and matured through the instrumentality of the will. And the apostle presents them as completed in the lives and conduct of wicked men. But in the regenerate this "body of the sins of the flesh," and these evil "desires of the heart and the mind," are "*nailed to the cross.*" The old man is subjected, and grace is in the ascendant.

* See Dr. Bates's Spiritual Perfection.

But though the corruptions of the heart are subjected, and are undergoing the process of mortification, they still occasionally stir—there are remains of them which must be exterminated. Though crucified, they are not yet entirely dead. But their complete destruction is provided for by the atonement and mediation of Christ, and it remains for the regenerate to make the application of the remedy. In this sense I understand Rom. vi, 11: “Likewise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin,”—*νεκροὺς μὲν εἶναι*, *truly, or in truth dead.*

2. I hasten now to the consideration of the latter branch of the great work of sanctification; that is, *the life of God in the soul.*

When the apostle exhorts us to reckon ourselves “dead indeed unto sin,” he immediately adds, “but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Rom. vi, 11. And when he requires us to cleanse ourselves “from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,” he continues, “perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Cor. vii, 1. And after giving a catalogue of “the works of the flesh,” which are to be eradicated, he immediately proceeds to give us a list of the opposite graces which are to be cultivated. “The fruit of the Spirit,” says he, “is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” Gal. v, 19–24. “For,” says he, “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,

which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. ii, 10. And we are required to "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," chap. iv, 24; and "which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Col. iii, 10.

From these passages we may gather the following essential elements of the life of grace—*knowledge, purity, and love.*

(1.) We must be "renewed in knowledge after the image of God." This implies the right direction and quickening of the intellectual faculties. The understanding being illuminated, it is prepared to discern moral distinctions, and to appreciate moral beauty. It is directed to the perfections of the Deity, and gazes upon the beauty of holiness. It sees the character and bearings of the great moral rule, and clearly distinguishes between the impulses of the flesh and the motions of the Spirit. It apprehends the atonement of Christ, and through this medium sees the way to be reconciled to the Father of mercies. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." John xvii, 3.

The complete sanctification of the intellect will correct all its moral aberrations. It will purify and regulate the thoughts, the conceptions, the imagination, the memory, and the judgment. The Psalmist felt a deep concern that his "thoughts" might be properly directed

and regulated. Says he, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts." Psa. cxxxix, 23. And a most excellent form of petition is directed to the same point in these words, "Cleanse *the thoughts* of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name."

(2.) We must be renewed in "holiness." The most general sense of the term "holiness" is separation from the world, and in this sense it implies both inward and outward religion. But in connection with the term "righteousness" I understand it to imply *purity of heart—the mind that was in Christ Jesus*. It consequently constitutes the root or foundation of all the active Christian graces. It implies not only freedom from sin, but dedication to God. And when it is entire, then do we *perfect holiness* in the fear of God. Without any measure of this heaven-born principle the heart is full of filthiness; and with its complete reign, and universal diffusion through the soul, the seeds of grace spring up into a luxuriant growth, and bear the fruits of righteousness, to the praise and glory of God.

(3.) We must be renewed in "righteousness." Righteousness implies the conformity of the motions of the heart and the actions of the life to the will of God. The highest evangelical sense of the term implies loving God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. St. Paul says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law,"

Rom. xiii, 10; πληρωμα νομου, *a full performance of the law*. And St. John speaks of "perfect love," 1 John iv, 17, 18;—a love that is without alloy—and that is complete—filling the whole soul, bringing all the thoughts and affections "into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Love is the sum of the evangelical law; and when, in the language of St. John, it is "made perfect," all the sensibilities of the soul are restored to their appropriate objects, and the voluntary power is conformed to the will of God, or, in other words, the affections and the will are fully sanctified.

And who will say that anything short of the entire man—the intellect, the sensibilities, the will, and the senses—is intended by the apostle in that comprehensive prayer, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. v, 23. Indeed, this seems to cover the whole ground. The whole man—all the powers of his soul, and all the functions of his body—are embraced. All these may be sanctified—sanctified wholly—and "preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And to give the fullest assurance of this high privilege, the apostle adds, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it," verse 24.

Having now presented the Scripture sense of entire sanctification, I shall conclude with a brief *improvement*.

1. I would ask those who have experienced justifying grace, but still feel the remains of the carnal mind, whether the entire sanctification of which I have been speaking does not appear necessary to the high ends of Christianity? Can we, dear brethren, feel the sediment of our inward corruptions stirred even by slight circumstances of temptation, and not feel that we need to be entirely cleansed from inward sin? Is it not a source of heartfelt grief, that the hateful passions of lust, anger, pride, covetousness, jealousy, &c., are often detected in our hearts? Do these roots of bitterness spring up and trouble us, and yet are we satisfied with our state? How should these things bring us into the dust; and with what earnestness should we groan to be delivered! We have doubtless often felt these enemies of the Lord, and of our own peace, as thorns in our sides and as pricks in our eyes. We have compelled them, for the time, to give the ground; we have prayed, resolved, and re-resolved, and yet we have too much evidence that "the Canaanite" still remains "in the land." We have prayed with the Psalmist, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me;" and yet, alas! is not our condition but too accurately described by the poet?—

"With outstretch'd hands and streaming eyes,
Oft I begin to grasp the prize;
I groan, I strive, I watch, I pray,
But O! how soon it dies away!
The deadly slumber still I feel
Afresh upon my spirit steal!"

2. Does not this complete renewing appear desirable? Can we glorify God in any way so fully as by a full conformity of heart and life to his holy will? Is anything so beautiful, so glorious in the whole universe, as complete holiness? What so fully promotive of our own happiness, as entire conformity to the image of God? O, why should we not "serve the Lord in the beauty of holiness?" Why not "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks?" How beggarly is all the glory of this world in comparison with the "pearl of perfect love!" How insipid the pleasures of sense in comparison with "joy and peace in believing!" How utterly worthless all the honors of the world in comparison with the peculiar honors of the "saints" or *holy ones* in whom the Lord "delighteth!" Here are riches, and honors, and pleasures, pure as the source whence they emanate, glorious as heaven, and lasting as eternity!

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LECTURE III.

THEORIES ON THE DOCTRINE OF PERFECTION—
WESLEYAN THEORY.

“ Let us go on unto perfection.” Hebrews vi, 1.

HAVING, in the preceding lecture, deduced the doctrine of entire sanctification, or Christian perfection, from the Scriptures, I shall next proceed to present the leading theories which have been maintained upon the subject by Christian divines.

And I shall begin with what, for distinction’s sake, I shall denominate the Wesleyan theory of evangelical perfection.

This theory simply asserts *the attainableness in the present life of a state of holiness truly denominated* CHRISTIAN PERFECTION. This Christian perfection implies *loving God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength—a perfect fulfillment of the terms of salvation.* These terms being based upon the covenant of grace, do not imply a perfect compliance with the requisitions of the covenant of works. In relation to the latter it is truly said, “ All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” “ There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not.” “ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.”

The following are the views of our standard writers upon the subject. I begin with Mr. Wesley:—

“On Monday, June 24, 1744, our first conference began; six clergymen and all our preachers being present. The next morning we seriously considered the doctrine of sanctification, or perfection. The questions asked concerning it, and the substance of the answers given, were as follows:—

“What is it to be sanctified?

“To be renewed in the image of God, “in righteousness and true holiness.”

“What is implied in being a perfect Christian?

“The loving God with all our heart, and mind, and soul. Deut. vi, 5.

“Does this imply, that all inward sin is taken away?

“Undoubtedly: or how can we be said to be “saved from all our uncleannesses?” Ezek. xxxvi, 29.’

“Our second conference began Aug. 1, 1745. The next morning we spoke of sanctification as follows:—

“When does inward sanctification begin?

“In the moment a man is justified. (Yet sin remains in him, yea, the seed of all sin, till he is sanctified throughout.) From that time a believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace.

“Is this ordinarily given till a little before death?

“It is not, to those who expect it no sooner.

“But may we expect it sooner?

“ ‘Why not? For, although we grant,— (1.) That the generality of believers, whom we have hitherto known, were not so sanctified till near death; (2.) That few of those to whom St. Paul wrote his epistles were so at that time; nor, (3.) He himself at the time of writing his former epistles: yet all this does not prove that we may not be so to-day.

“ ‘In what manner should we preach sanctification?

“ ‘Scarce at all to those who are not pressing forward; to those who are, always by way of promise; always drawing, rather than driving.’

“ Our third conference began Tuesday, May 26, 1746. In this we carefully read over the minutes of the two preceding conferences, to observe whether anything contained therein might be retrenched or altered, on more mature consideration. But we did not see cause to alter in any respect what we had agreed upon before.

“ Our fourth conference began on Tuesday, June 16, 1747. As several persons were present who did not believe the doctrine of perfection, we agreed to examine it from the foundation.

“ In order to do this it was asked,

“ ‘How much is allowed by our brethren who differ from us with regard to entire sanctification?

“ ‘They grant, (1.) That every one must be entirely sanctified in the article of death.

(2.) That till then a believer daily grows in grace, comes nearer and nearer to perfection.

(3.) That we ought to be continually pressing after it, and to exhort all others so to do.

“ “ What do we allow them ?

“ “ We grant, (1.) That many of those who have died in the faith, yea, the greater part of those we have known, were not perfected in love, till a little before their death. (2.) That the term *sanctified* is continually applied by St. Paul to all that were justified. (3.) That by this term alone he rarely, if ever, means, “ saved from all sin.” (4.) That, consequently, it is not proper to use it in that sense, without adding the word *wholly, entirely*, or the like. (5.) That the inspired writers almost continually speak of or to those who were justified, but very rarely of or to those who were wholly sanctified.* (6.) That, consequently, it behooves us to speak almost continually of the state of justification ; but more rarely,† at least in full and explicit terms, concerning entire sanctification.

“ “ What, then, is the point where we divide ?

“ “ It is this : should we expect to be saved from all sin before the article of death ? ” ‡

Again :—

* “ That is, unto those alone, exclusive of others ; but they speak to them, jointly with others, almost continually.”

† “ More rarely, I allow ; but yet in some places very frequently, strongly, and explicitly.”

‡ Plain Account of Christian Perfection, pp. 48-51.

“What is Christian perfection ?

“The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul ; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions, are governed by pure love.

“Do you affirm that this perfection excludes all infirmities, ignorance, and mistake ?

“I continually affirm quite the contrary, and always have done so.

“But how can every thought, word, and work, be governed by pure love, and the man be subject at the same time to ignorance and mistake.

“I see no contradiction here : “A man may be filled with pure love, and still be liable to mistake.” Indeed, I do not expect to be freed from actual mistakes till this mortal puts on immortality. I believe this to be a natural consequence of the soul’s dwelling in flesh and blood. For we cannot now think at all but by the mediation of those bodily organs which have suffered equally with the rest of our frame. And hence we cannot avoid sometimes thinking wrong, till this corruptible shall have put on incorruption.

“But we may carry this thought further yet. A mistake in judgment may possibly occasion a mistake in practice. For instance : Mr. De Renty’s mistake touching the nature of mortification, arising from prejudice of education, occasioned that practical mistake, his wearing an iron girdle. And a thousand such instances

there may be, even in those who are in the highest state of grace. Yet, where every word and action springs from love, such a mistake is not properly a sin. However, it cannot bear the rigor of God's justice, but needs the atoning blood.

“ ‘What was the judgment of all our brethren who met at Bristol in August, 1758, on this head?

“ ‘It was expressed in these words:—
(1.) Every one may mistake as long as he lives.
(2.) A mistake in opinion may occasion a mistake in practice. (3.) Every such mistake is a transgression of the perfect law. Therefore,
(4.) Every such mistake, were it not for the blood of atonement, would expose to eternal damnation. (5.) It follows, that the most perfect have continual need of the merits of Christ, even for their actual transgressions, and may say for themselves, as well as for their brethren, “ ‘Forgive us our trespasses.”

“ ‘This easily accounts for what might otherwise seem to be utterly unaccountable namely, that those who are not offended when we speak of the highest degree of love, yet will not hear of living without sin. The reason is, they know all men are liable to mistake, and that in practice as well as in judgment. But they do not know, or do not observe, that this is not sin, if love is the sole principle of action.

“ ‘But still, if they live without sin, does not this exclude the necessity of a mediator?

At least, is it not plain that they stand no longer in need of Christ in his priestly office ?

“Far from it. None feel their need of Christ like these ; none so entirely depend upon him. For Christ does not give life to the soul separate from, but in and with himself. Hence his words are equally true of all men, in whatsoever state of grace they are ; “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in me : Without” (or separate from) “me ye can do nothing.”

“In every state we need Christ in the following respects :—(1.) Whatever grace we receive, it is a free gift from him. (2.) We receive it as his purchase, merely in consideration of the price he paid. (3.) We have this grace, not only from Christ, but in him. For our perfection is not like that of a tree, which flourishes by the sap derived from its own root, but, as was said before, like that of a branch which, united to the vine, bears fruit ; but, severed from it, is dried up and withered. (4.) All our blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, depend on his intercession for us, which is one branch of his priestly office, whereof therefore we have always equal need. (5.) The best of men still need Christ in his priestly office to atone for their omissions, their shortcomings, (as some not improperly speak,) their mistakes in judgment and practice, and their defects of various kinds. For these are all deviations from the perfect law, and consequently need an

atonement. Yet that they are not properly sins, we apprehend may appear from the words of St. Paul: "He that loveth, hath fulfilled the law; for love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. xiii, 10. Now, mistakes, and whatever infirmities necessarily flow from the corruptible state of the body, are no way contrary to love; nor, therefore, in the Scripture sense, sin.

"To explain myself a little further on this head: (1.) Not only sin, properly so called, (that is, a voluntary transgression of a known law,) but sin improperly so called, (that is, an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown,) needs the atoning blood. (2.) I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes these involuntary transgressions, which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality. (3.) Therefore, *sinless perfection* is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself. (4.) I believe a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions. (5.) Such transgressions you may call sins, if you please: I do not, for the reasons above mentioned.'"*

And again:—"Some thoughts occurred to my mind this morning concerning Christian perfection, and the manner and time of receiving it, which I believe may be useful to set down.

"1. By perfection I mean the humble, gentle, patient love of God and our neighbor, ruling our tempers, words, and actions.

* Plain Account of Christian Perfection, pp. 62-67.

"I do not include an impossibility of falling from it, either in part or in whole. Therefore, I retract several expressions in our hymns, which partly express, partly imply, such an impossibility.

"And I do not contend for the term *sinless*, though I do not object against it.

"2. As to the manner. I believe this perfection is always wrought in the soul by a simple act of faith; consequently in an instant.

"But I believe a gradual work, both preceding and following that instant.

"3. As to the time. I believe this instant generally is the instant of death, the moment before the soul leaves the body. But I believe it may be ten, twenty, or forty years before.

"I believe it is usually many years after justification, but that it may be within five years or five months after it; I know no conclusive argument to the contrary.

"If it must be many years after justification, I would be glad to know how many. *Pretium quotus arroget annus?* [What length of time will sanction it?]

"And how many days or months, or even years, can any one allow to be between perfection and death? How far from justification must it be; and how near to death?

"LONDON, Jan. 27, 1767."*

Next to Mr. Wesley we reckon Mr. Fletcher. His statement of the doctrine of evangelical perfection is as follows:—

* Works. vol. vi, pp. 531, 532.

“ We give the name of Christian perfection to that maturity of grace and holiness which established adult believers attain to under the Christian dispensation; and thus we distinguish that maturity of grace both from the ripeness of grace, which belongs to the dispensation of the Jews below us; and from the ripeness of glory which belongs to departed saints above us. Hence it appears, that by Christian perfection we mean nothing but the cluster and maturity of the graces which compose the Christian character in the church militant.

“ In other words, Christian perfection is a spiritual constellation made up of these gracious stars,—perfect repentance, perfect faith, perfect humility, perfect meekness, perfect self-denial, perfect resignation, perfect hope, perfect charity for our visible enemies, as well as for our earthly relations; and, above all, perfect love for our invisible God, through the explicit knowledge of our Mediator, Jesus Christ. And as this last star is always accompanied by all the others, as Jupiter is by his satellites; we frequently use, as St. John, the phrase ‘ perfect love,’ instead of the word ‘ perfection :’ understanding by it the pure love of God, shed abroad in the hearts of established believers by the Holy Ghost, which is abundantly given them under the fullness of the Christian dispensation.

“ Should any one ask if the Christian perfection which we contend for is a sinless perfection, we reply, ‘ Sin is the transgression of’ a divine ‘ law ;’ and man may be considered

either as being under the anti-evangelical, Christless, remediless law of our Creator; or as being under the evangelical, mediatorial, remedying law of our Redeemer: and the question must be answered according to the nature of these two laws.

“With respect to the first, that is, the Adamic, Christless law of innocence and paradisiacal perfection, we utterly renounce the doctrine of sinless perfection, for three reasons. We are conceived and born in a state of sinful degeneracy, whereby that law is already virtually broken. Our mental and bodily powers are so enfeebled, that we cannot help actually breaking that law in numberless instances, even after our full conversion. And, when once we have broken that law, it considers us as transgressors for ever: nor can it any more pronounce us sinless than the rigorous law which condemns a man to be hanged for murder can absolve a murderer, let his repentance and faith be ever so perfect. Therefore, I repeat it, with respect to the Christless law of paradisiacal obedience, we entirely disclaim sinless perfection.

“But Christ has so completely fulfilled our Creator’s paradisiacal law of innocence, which allows neither of repentance nor of renewed obedience, that we shall not be judged by that law; but by a law adapted to our present state and circumstances,—a milder law, called ‘the law of Christ;’ that is, the Mediator’s law, which is like himself, ‘full of’ evangelical ‘grace and truth.’

“ We do not doubt, but as a reasonable, loving father never requires of his child who is only ten years old the work of one who is thirty years of age ; so our heavenly Father never expects of us, in our debilitated state, the obedience of immortal Adam in paradise, or the uninterrupted worship of sleepless angels in heaven. We are persuaded, therefore, that, for Christ’s sake, he is pleased with an humble obedience to our present light, and a loving exertion of our present powers ; accepting our gospel services according to what we have, and not according to what we have not. Nor dare we call that loving exertion of our present power sin ; lest by so doing we should contradict the Scriptures, confound sin and obedience, and remove all the land-marks which divide the devil’s common from the Lord’s vineyard.

“ We exhort the strongest believers to ‘ grow up to Christ in all things :’ asserting that there is no holiness and no happiness in heaven (much less upon earth) which does not admit of a growth, except the holiness and happiness of God himself ; because, in the very nature of things, a being absolutely perfect, and in every sense infinite, can never have anything added to him. But infinite additions may be made to beings every way finite, such as glorified saints and holy angels are.

“ Hence, it appears, that the comparison which we make between the ripeness of a fruit, and the maturity of a believer’s grace, cannot be carried into an exact parallel. For a perfect

Christian grows far more than a feeble believer, whose growth is still obstructed by the shady thorns of sin, and by the draining suckers of iniquity. Besides, a fruit which is come to its perfection, instead of growing, falls and decays : whereas a 'babe in Christ' is called to grow till he becomes a perfect Christian ; a perfect Christian, till he becomes a disembodied spirit ; a disembodied spirit, till he reaches the perfection of a saint glorified in body and soul ; and such a saint, till he has fathomed the infinite depths of divine perfection, that is, to all eternity. For if we go on 'from faith to faith,' and are spiritually 'changed from glory to glory,' by beholding God 'darkly through a glass' on earth ; much more shall we experience improving changes, when we shall 'see him as he is,' and behold him 'face to face,' in various, numberless, and still brighter discoveries of himself in heaven."*

The following are Dr. A. Clarke's views :—
 • "The word 'sanctify' has two meanings. 1. It signifies to consecrate, to separate from earth and common use, and to devote or dedicate to God and his service. 2. It signifies to make holy or pure.

"Many talk much, and indeed well, of what Christ has done for us : but how little is spoken of what he is to do in us ! and yet all that he has done for us is in reference to what he is to do in us. He was incarnated, suffered, died, and rose again from the dead ; ascended to heaven,

* Last Check, pp. 329-332.

and there appears in the presence of God for us. These were all saving, atoning, and mediating acts for us ; that he might reconcile us to God ; that he might blot out our sin ; that he might purge our consciences from dead works ; that he might bind the strong man armed—take away the armor in which he trusted, wash the polluted heart, destroy every foul and abominable desire, all tormenting and unholy tempers ; that he might make the heart his throne, fill the soul with his light, power, and life ; and, in a word, ‘destroy the works of the devil.’ These are done in us ; without which we cannot be saved unto eternal life. But these acts done in us are consequent on the acts done for us : for had he not been incarnated, suffered, and died in our stead, we could not receive either pardon or holiness ; and did he not cleanse and purify our hearts, we could not enter into the place where all is purity : for the beatific vision is given to them only who are purified from all unrighteousness : for it is written, ‘Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.’ Nothing is purified by death ;—nothing in the grave ; nothing in heaven. The living stones of the temple, like those of that at Jerusalem, are hewn, squared, and cut here, in the church militant, to prepare them to enter into the composition of the church triumphant.

“ This perfection is the restoration of man to the state of holiness from which he fell, by creating him anew in Christ Jesus, and restoring to him that image and likeness of God which

he has lost. A higher meaning than this it cannot have : a lower meaning it must not have. God made man in that degree of perfection which was pleasing to his own infinite wisdom and goodness. Sin defaced this divine image : Jesus came to restore it. Sin must have no triumph ; and the Redeemer of mankind must have his glory. But if man be not perfectly saved from all sin, sin does triumph, and Satan exult, because they have done a mischief that Christ either cannot or will not remove. To say he cannot, would be shocking blasphemy against the infinite power and dignity of the great Creator ; to say he will not, would be equally such against the infinite benevolence and holiness of his nature. All sin, whether in power, guilt, or defilement, is the work of the devil ; and Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil ; and as all unrighteousness is sin, so his blood cleanseth from all sin, because it cleanseth from all unrighteousness.

“ Many stagger at the term *perfection* in Christianity ; because they think that what is implied in it is inconsistent with a state of probation, and savors of pride and presumption : but we must take good heed how we stagger at any word of God ; and much more how we deny or fritter away the meaning of any of his sayings, lest he reprove us, and we be found liars before him. But it may be that the term is rejected because it is not understood. Let us examine its import.

“ The word ‘ perfection,’ in reference to any

person or thing, signifies that such person or thing is complete or finished : that it has nothing redundant, and is in nothing defective. And hence that observation of a learned civilian is at once both correct and illustrative, namely, ‘ We count those things perfect which want nothing requisite for the end whereto they were instituted.’ And *to be perfect*, often signifies ‘ to be blameless, clear, irreproachable ;’ and, according to the above definition of Hooker, a man may be said to be perfect who answers the end for which God made him ; and as God requires every man to love him with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and his neighbor as himself, then he is a perfect man that does so ; he answers the end for which God made him ; and this is more evident from the nature of that love which fills his heart ; for, as love is the principle of obedience, so he that loves his God with all his powers will obey him with all his powers ; and he who loves his neighbor as himself will not only do no injury to him, but, on the contrary, labor to promote his best interests. Why the doctrine which enjoins such a state of perfection as this should be dreaded, ridiculed, or despised, is a most strange thing ; and the opposition to it can only be from that carnal mind that is enmity to God ; ‘ that is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.’ And had I no other proof that man is fallen from God, his opposition to Christian holiness would be to me sufficient.

“ The whole design of God was to restore

man to his image, and raise him from the ruins of his fall ; in a word, to make him perfect ; to blot out all his sins, purify his soul, and fill him with holiness ; so that no unholy temper, evil desire, or impure affection or passion, shall either lodge, or have any being within him : this, and this only, is true religion, or Christian perfection ; and a less salvation than this would be dishonorable to the sacrifice of Christ, and the operation of the Holy Ghost ; and would be as unworthy of the appellation of ‘ Christianity, as it would be of that of ‘ holiness or perfection.’ They who ridicule this are scoffers at the word of God ; many of them totally irreligious men, sitting in the seat of the scornful. They who deny it, deny the whole scope and design of divine revelation and the mission of Jesus Christ. And they who preach the opposite doctrine are either speculative Antinomians, or pleaders for Baal.

“ When St. Paul says he ‘ warns every man and teaches every man in all wisdom, that he may present every man PERFECT in Christ Jesus,’ he must mean something. What, then, is this *something* ? It must mean ‘ that holiness without which none shall see the Lord.’ Call it by what name we please, it must imply the pardon of all transgression, and the removal of the whole body of sin and death ; for this must take place before we can be like him, and see him as he is, in the effulgence of his own glory. This fitness, then, to appear before God, and thorough preparation for eternal glory, is what I

plead for, pray for, and heartily recommend to all true believers, under the name of *Christian perfection*. Had I a better name, one more energetic, one with a greater plenitude of meaning, one more worthy of the efficacy of the blood that bought our peace, and cleanseth from all unrighteousness, I would gladly adopt and use it. Even the word 'perfection' has, in some relations, so many qualifications and abatements that cannot comport with that full and glorious salvation recommended in the gospel, and bought and sealed by the blood of the cross, that I would gladly lay it by, and employ a word more positive and unequivocal in its meaning, and more worthy of the merit of the infinite atonement of Christ, and of the energy of his almighty Spirit; but there is none in our language; which I deplore as an inconvenience and a loss.*

The doctrine of "entire SANCTIFICATION, or the perfected HOLINESS of believers," is thus asserted by Mr. Watson:—"That a distinction exists between a regenerate state and a state of entire and perfect holiness, will be generally allowed. Regeneration, we have seen, is concomitant with justification: but the apostles, in addressing the body of believers in the churches to whom they wrote their epistles, set before them, both in the prayers they offer in their behalf, and in the exhortations they administer, a still higher degree of deliverance from sin, as well as a higher growth in Christian virtues

* Christian Theology, pp. 182-185.

Two passages only need be quoted to prove this. 1 Thess. v, 23, 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 2 Cor. vii, 1, 'Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' In both these passages deliverance from sin is the subject spoken of; and the prayer in one instance, and the exhortation in the other, goes to the extent of the entire sanctification of 'the soul' and 'spirit,' as well as of the 'flesh' or 'body,' from all sin; by which can only be meant our complete deliverance from all spiritual pollution, all inward depravation of the heart, as well as that which, expressing itself outwardly by the indulgence of the senses, is called 'filthiness of the flesh.' **

The following are Mr. Treffry's views:—
"Christianity being the doctrine of Christ, we infer that Christian perfection implies a conformity to the will of Christ, in all that relates to inward and outward holiness, to the temper of our minds, and the conduct of our lives: or, in other words, it is the full maturity of the Christian principle, and the consistent and uniform exemplification of Christian practice. By the Christian principle, we understand that divine virtue from which the several graces and fruits of Christianity spring, and by which

* Institutes, part ii, chap. xxix.

they are supported and kept in continual operation. Or, in other words, it is that which resembles the germinating power in vegetation, that unfolds itself in buds, blossoms, and fruits, containing 'within it, as in an embryo state, the rudiments of all true virtue; which, striking deep its roots, though feeble and lowly in its beginnings, silently progressive, and almost insensibly maturing, yet will shortly, even in the bleak and churlish temperature of this world, lift up its head and spread abroad its branches, bearing abundant fruits.'*

Again this author says:—"Perfection has a two-fold character; there is a perfection of parts, and a perfection of degrees. A thing is perfect in the former sense, when it possesses all the properties or qualities which are essential to its nature, without any deficiency, or redundancy; thus a machine is perfect, when it has all its parts, and these parts so admirably disposed as completely to answer the purpose for which it is formed. Thus a human body is perfect, when it has all the limbs, muscles, arteries, veins, &c., that belong to a human body; and thus I conceive every Christian believer is perfect, as he is endowed with all the graces of the Spirit, and the 'fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.' And this kind of perfection admits of no increase; any addition would deface the beauty and destroy the harmony of the

* Treatise on Christian Perfection, pp. 11, 12.

whole : add another wheel to your watches, and the purpose would be defeated for which they are formed ; imagine another limb joined to a human body, and it would disfigure rather than beautify it, and retard rather than accelerate its motion. In religion, indeed, the imagination cannot picture any additional virtue, nor the mind conceive of any new grace to be joined to the Christian character ; the feeblest saint is as perfect in this sense as the most established Christian, and the babe as complete as the man. And I greatly question whether the glorified spirits in heaven are more perfect in this view than the saints upon earth ; for if old things pass away, and all things become new, when the soul is vitally united to Christ, may we not suppose that the most consummate state of blessedness in the kingdom of God consists in the endless accessions which those graces will receive that adorn the soul in this world ?

“ Do the spirits of just men made perfect love God with an intense ardor and growing attachment ? And is not ‘ the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us ?’ Do not we ‘ love him because he first loved us ?’ Do they possess ‘ a fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore ?’ And do not ‘ we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory ?’ ‘ And return to Zion with singing, and everlasting joy upon our heads ?’

“ Do they see Christ as he is, and participate his likeness ? ‘ And do we not behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, till changed into

the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord ?

“ Do they say with a loud voice, ‘ Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing ?’ And do not ‘ we sing and make melody in our hearts unto the Lord ?’

“ ‘ Thee they sing with glory crown’d,
We extol the slaughter’d Lamb ;
Lower if our voices sound,
Our subject is the same.’

“ Far be it from me to assert anything positively on this subject ; it is possible there may be latent powers in the human soul which never can be developed in this world, but which may, in a future state of existence, give birth to new and endless enjoyments ; for if this life be only ‘ the bud of being,’ what finite mind can conceive the glories that await us, when we blossom with unfading beauty in the garden of Paradise ?

“ 2d. Perfection may be considered in reference to its degrees. I do not like this term, as I am conscious it may be abused, but it is the best I can find to express my meaning ; it implies the having all the ‘ fruits of the Spirit’ brought to such maturity, as to exclude every opposing principle, and every contrary temper.* A man may be perfect in the former sense, and imperfect in the latter ; just as a child may be

* Instead of *perfection of degrees*, I would prefer, as less liable to be misunderstood, *perfection of character*.

perfect in parts, and imperfect in degrees; he may have all the limbs, and so on, of a human being; but not the strength, the vigor, nor the intellectual endowments of a man. Thus a Christian, who has been recently ‘born of God,’ and just introduced into the glorious liberty of the gospel, may have all the graces of Christianity, and yet these may exist in imperfect degrees: for instance, every Christian possesses a confidence in God, a trust in his promises, and a reliance upon his veracity; not the confidence of ignorance, nor of presumption, but the genuine offspring of experimental knowledge; for ‘they that know thy name,’ saith David, ‘will put their trust in thee.’ But this confidence, though perfect in its principle, is imperfect in its degree; it is sometimes disturbed by doubts, molested by fears, or harassed by anxious cares; but when the soul has attained to maturity in Christian holiness, this confidence is perfect, and doubt, distrust, and fear, cease to exist. And though in reference to worldly things the Christian may walk ‘in darkness, and have no light;’ the fig-tree may not blossom, nor fruit be in the vine; friends may desert him, and foes meditate his ruin; yet ‘he shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord;’ hence he can say, with Job, ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him;’ or with the poet,—

“ ‘Though waves and storms go o’er my head,
Though health, and strength, and friends be gone;

Though joys be wither'd all, and dead;
 Though every comfort be withdrawn;
 On this my steadfast soul relies,
 Father, thy mercy never dies.'

"Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ loves God, and gives the most indubitable evidence of that love, by keeping God's commandments, and doing the things that please him. But this love, although perfect in its nature, is not in its degree; there may be an undue attachment to the world, an improper fondness for the creature, or an inordinate degree of self-love; but when the Christian has gone on 'unto perfection,' then he 'loves God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength, and his neighbor as himself.' This love knows no rival; neither the seductions of sin, nor the lures of the world, nor the charms of the creature, can alienate the affections from the sole object that has engrossed them; for such a man, wealth has no value, pleasure no attraction, honor no brilliance, and dignities no splendor: hence he adopts the language of the poet,—

"All my treasure is above,
 All my riches is thy love,
 Whom have I in heaven but thee?
 Thou art all in all to me.'"^{*}

I shall close my quotations of Wesleyan authorities with a statement of the doctrine by the venerable Bishop Hedding:†—

^{*} Sermon on Heb. vi, 1.

† This brief exposition of the doctrine of Christian

“Brethren,—Among many other important questions, the following have been asked you, and you have answered them in the affirmative: ‘Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life? Are you groaning after it?’

“It is important for you, as Christians and as ministers, to have a thorough understanding of this great subject. The subject is Christian perfection, or being made perfect in love in this life. It is being delivered from sin, and filled with the love of God. The brethren ask me to state ‘the nature of justification, regeneration, and sanctification, and the difference between them as distinct works of grace.’ I understand justification to be a pardon of past sins; and regeneration, which takes place at the same time, to be a change of heart, or of our moral nature. Regeneration also, being the same as the new birth, is the beginning of sanctification, though not the completion of it, or not entire sanctification. Regeneration is the beginning of purification; entire sanctification is the finishing of that work.

“The difference between a justified soul who is not fully sanctified, and one fully sanctified, I understand to be this:—

“The first (if he does not backslide) is kept

perfection was delivered, by request, in an address to the candidates for orders in the New-Jersey Conference, April, 1841, and subsequently published in the *Christian Advocate and Journal* in accordance with a vote of the conference.

from voluntarily committing known sin ; which is what is commonly meant in the New Testament by *committing sin*. But he yet finds in himself the remains of inbred corruption, or original sin ; such as pride, anger, envy, a feeling of hatred to an enemy, a rejoicing at a calamity which has fallen upon an enemy, &c.

“ Now, in all this the regenerate soul does not act voluntarily—his choice is against all these evils ; God has given him a new heart, which hates all these evils, and resists and overcomes them as soon as the mind perceives them. The regenerate soul wishes these evils were not in his heart, yet he has in himself no power to destroy them. Though the Christian does not feel guilty for this depravity as he would do if he had voluntarily broken the law of God, yet he is often grieved and afflicted, and reprovèd at a sight of this sinfulness of his nature.

“ Though the soul in this state enjoys a degree of religion, yet it is conscious it is not what it ought to be, nor what it must be to be fit for heaven.

“ It seems that the sinfulness of our nature, or original sin, may remain in the new-born soul independent of choice, and even against choice.

“ The second, or the person fully sanctified, is cleansed from all these inward involuntary sins.

“ He may be tempted by Satan, by men, and by his own bodily appetites, to commit sin, but

his heart is free from these inward fires, which before his full sanctification were ready to fall in with temptation, and lead him into transgression. He may be tempted to be proud, to love the world, to be revengeful or angry, to hate an enemy, to wish him evil, or to rejoice at his calamity, but he feels none of these passions in his heart; the Holy Ghost has cleansed him from all these pollutions of his nature. Thus it is that, being emptied of sin, the perfect Christian is filled with the love of God, even with that perfect love which casteth out fear.

“But is this sanctification instantaneous or gradual? It is both. In some respects it is the one, and in other respects it is the other. In a soul who does not backslide, the work of sanctification goes on gradually till it is finished, and that event is instantaneous. Finishing the work is accomplished in an instant. Mr. Wesley says something like this: ‘A man may be some time dying, but there is an instant in which he dies.’ So in a Christian, sin may be some time dying, but there is an instant in which it dies; and that event is full sanctification. In some, the fact of its being finished in an instant is more apparent to the subject than it is in others.

“But how is this great work performed? By the Holy Spirit—no other power can effect it; and this work of the Spirit is obtained only through the atonement, and through faith in that atonement. That faith which is the condition of this entire sanctification is exercised

only by a penitent heart—a heart willing to part with all sin for ever, and determined to do the will of God in all things. Believe and pray for it—it is as important that you should experience this holy work as it is that the sinners to whom you preach should be converted. God is as able, willing, and ready to do this great work for you as he was to pardon your sins. Christ is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God through him. But what would be the fate of a soul born of the Spirit, but not fully sanctified, called to die in that state? If he have not backslidden he would go to heaven. Not that he is now fit for heaven, but Christ would fit him should he call him out of the world. Before his departure Christ would either accept his weak faith, or give him a degree of faith equal to his wants, and thus save his soul. This view is supported by the numerous promises in Scripture of eternal salvation to all who die the children of God. These promises, to such as persevere and remain the children of God, include all the work of grace necessary to fit them for heaven. But these views furnish no excuse for us to neglect seeking full sanctification now. If we were sure we should live twenty years, then experience full sanctification and die, there would be many and important reasons for us to seek that great blessing now, and so to believe as to experience it this day. With it we should be more happy, and more useful; and as we are changeable creatures, with this blessing we shall be more

safe than we could be without it. But can a person possessing perfect love, perfectly keep God's holy law, as angels do in heaven? No; if he could, he would no longer need the atonement, any more than holy angels do. Yet through the atonement, he may acceptably keep the law.

"He loves God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself; he acts in all things under the influence of that love; and this is the end of the commandment, and the fulfilling of the law. And though this soul is free from what the Bible calls sin, yet he has infirmities and unavoidable failings growing out of the original fall, on account of which he ought to say,

'Every moment, Lord, I need
The merits of thy death;'

forgive me my trespasses, &c. Unavoidable mistakes and failings are covered by the atonement; and through it his obedience is accepted."

I have been the more diffuse in my references, for the purpose of presenting all the phases of the subject as it is maintained by our standard writers. A clear statement of the doctrine of Christian perfection, I have long felt, is absolutely necessary at the outset; for without this we meet objections at every step which embarrass us, and involve in obscurity and doubt its plainest points. I have therefore selected those passages from the writings of Mr. Wesley, Mr. Fletcher, and succeeding writers, which partake specifically of the nature of defi-

nitions, and especially such as give definitions which were rendered necessary by objections founded upon a false issue. After occupying so much time in drawing out the true Wesleyan theory, little more will be said in the present lecture. I shall close by a consecutive statement of the propositions which are couched under the language of my authorities.

1. As to the nature of Christian perfection, it is clear, *first*, that our authors neither hold that it implies perfection in knowledge, nor a perfect fulfillment of the requirements of the Adamic law, that is, legal perfection. But, *secondly*, that it implies simply *loving God with all the heart*.

2. That *entire sanctification* and Christian perfection are identical.

3. That a state of sanctification, simply, as that state is referred to in the sacred writers, seldom implies all that we mean by Christian perfection; but when we design, by the term sanctification, to express the state of perfection contended for, we should qualify it by the word *entire*, or the like.

4. That the term perfection, signifying the completeness of a thing in the attributes of its kind, considering its circumstances and the purposes of its being, admits of various degrees. Consequently perfection varies in its character according to the character of its subject; and may vary in its degrees, in subjects of the same class, according to the circumstances of the subject, and its particular destination.

5. That by being saved from all sin in the present life, we mean being saved, *first*, from all outward sin—all violations of the requirements of the law of love which relate to our outward conduct: and, *secondly*, from all inward sin—all violations of the law of love which relate to the intellect, sensibilities, and the will.

LECTURE IV.

NEW THEORY.

“To the law and to the testimony.” Isa. viii, 20.

IN the present lecture I shall briefly notice the controversy upon the subject of Christian perfection now in progress among our Presbyterian and Congregational brethren in this country.

President Mahan and Professor Finney, of the Oberlin Theological Institute, with several others, have published views upon the subject which are deemed by most of their brethren as novel, and injurious to the interests of religion. As the works of these gentlemen, and those of their opponents, are before the public, and can be easily obtained, I shall not occupy much space in quoting their language.

Messrs. Mahan and Finney, in their systematic statements of the doctrine, tell us both what it is and what it is not. The following is the first part of President Mahan’s statement:—

“My design in the present discourse is to answer this one question: *What is perfection in holiness?* In answering this inquiry, I would remark, that perfection in holiness implies a full and perfect discharge of our entire duty, of all existing obligations in respect to God and all other beings. It is perfect obedience to the moral law. It is ‘loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbor as ourselves.’ It implies the entire absence of all selfishness, and the perpetual presence and all-pervading influence of pure and perfect love. ‘Love is the fulfilling of the law.’”*

Professor Finney’s is as follows:—“By entire sanctification, I understand the consecration of the whole being to God. In other words, it is that state of devotedness to God and his service required by the moral law. The law is perfect. It requires just what is right, all that is right, and nothing more. Nothing more nor less can possibly be perfection or entire sanctification, than obedience to the law. Obedience to the law of God in an infant, a man, an angel, and in God himself, is perfection in each of them. And nothing can possibly be perfection in any being short of this, nor can there possibly be anything above it.”†

It will be perceived that these statements differ from those of our standards upon the point of *legal* obedience. They assert “perfect obe-

* Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection, pp. 7, 8.

† Lecture I. Oberlin Evangelist, vol. ii, p. 1.

dience to the moral law," whereas Wesleyans deny the practicability of such obedience.

Their theory is understood by their opponents to differ in this respect from the Wesleyan theory. Hence they set them down as a distinct class of perfectionists, holding to a *legal perfection*, which some think a much *better*, and others a much *worse*, system than that of the Methodists.*

My object at present is not so much to controvert the views of these brethren, as to call particular attention to a feature in their statements which has no place in our standards. This however seems to be materially modified by their negative propositions. As a specimen of this, I give the following from Mr. Mahan's negative statement:—

"Hence I remark, that perfection in holiness does not imply, that we now love God with all the strength and intensity with which redeemed spirits in heaven love him. The depth and intensity of our love depend, under all circumstances, upon the vigor and reach of our powers, and the extent and distinctness of our vision of divine truth. 'Here we see through a glass darkly; there face to face.' Here our powers are comparatively weak; there they will be endowed with an immortal and tireless

* See Dr. Pond's article, *Biblical Repository*, January, 1839, p. 45; and "The Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification stated, and defended against the Errors of Perfectionism, by W. D. Snodgrass, D. D.," pp, 98, 99. "*Who shall decide when doctors disagree?*"

vigor. In each and every sphere, perfection in holiness implies a strength and intensity of love corresponding with the reach of our powers and the extent and distinctness of our vision of truth in that particular sphere. The child is perfect in holiness who perpetually exercises a filial and affectionate obedience to all the divine requisitions, and loves God with all the powers which it possesses as a child. The man is perfect in holiness who exercises the same supreme and affectionate obedience to all that God requires, and loves him to the full extent of his knowledge and strength as a man. The saint on earth is perfect, when he loves with all the strength and intensity rendered practicable by the extent of his knowledge and reach of his powers in his present sphere. The saint in heaven will be favored with a seraph's vision, and a seraph's power. To be perfect there, he must love and adore with a seraph's vigor, and burn with a seraph's fire."*

Upon the two parts of the statement, Dr. Snodgrass remarks as follows:—"It [Christian perfection] is defined by a recent writer, as involving 'perfect obedience to the moral law.' It implies, he says, 'a full and perfect discharge of our entire duty in respect to God and to all other beings.' And, if this definition were allowed to stand unqualified and unimpaired, we should desire no other. But it falls out, in immediate connection with this language, that the demands of the law of God upon us depend upon

* Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection, p. 9.

our '*circumstances*'—that 'our powers are comparatively weak'—and that what is required of us is holiness 'corresponding with the reach of our powers.' We are thus driven at once from what seemed to be safe and tenable ground, and thrown upon the radical error, that the extent of our powers, fallen as we are, is the ground and measure of our obligation."*

Professor Finney, among a multitude of negative propositions, has the following:—"It [Christian perfection] does not imply the same degree of knowledge that we might have possessed, had we always improved our time in its acquisition. The law cannot require us to love God or man as well as we might have been able to love them, had we always improved all our time in obtaining all the knowledge we could, in regard to their nature, character, and interests. If this were implied in the requisition of the law, there is not a saint on earth or in heaven that is or ever can be perfect. What is lost in this respect is lost, and past neglect can never be so atoned for as that we shall ever be able to make up in our acquisitions of knowledge what we have lost. It will, no doubt, be true to all eternity, that we shall have less knowledge than we might have possessed, had we filled up all our time in its acquisition. We do not, cannot, nor shall we ever be able to love God as well as we might have loved him, had we always applied our minds to the acquisition of knowledge respecting him. And if

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, &c., pp. 22, 23.

entire sanctification is to be understood as implying that we love God as much as we should, had we all the knowledge we might have had, then I repeat it, there is not a saint on earth or in heaven, nor ever will be, that is entirely sanctified.

“It does not imply the same amount of service that we might have rendered, had we never sinned. The law of God does not imply or suppose that our powers are in a perfect state : that our strength of body or mind is what it would have been, had we never sinned. But it simply requires us to use what strength we have. The very wording of the law is proof conclusive that it extends its demands only to the full amount of what strength we have. And this is true of every moral being, however great or small.

“It does not require the same degree of love that we might have rendered, but for our ignorance. We certainly know much less of God, and therefore are much less capable of loving him ; that is, we are capable of loving him with a less amount, and to a less degree, than if we knew more of him, which we might have done but for our sins. And as I have before said, this will be true to all eternity ; for we can never make amends by any future obedience or diligence for this any more than for other sins. And to all eternity, it will remain true, that we know less of God, and love him less than we might and should have done, had we always done our duty. If entire sanctification, there-

fore, implies the same degree of love or service that might have been rendered, had we always developed our powers by a perfect use of them, then there is not a saint on earth or in heaven that is or ever will be in that state. The most perfect development and improvement of our powers must depend upon the most perfect use of them. And every departure from their perfect use is a diminishing of their highest development, and a curtailing of their capabilities to serve God in the highest and best manner. All sin, then, does just so much toward crippling and curtailing the powers of body and mind, and rendering them, by just so much, incapable of performing the service they might otherwise have rendered.”*

Now upon these and similar positions the Oberlin divines are charged by their opponents with “letting down the law of God.”† And it does appear to me that they are logically liable to this charge. For in speaking of the standard of holiness, they always refer to “the law;” and Christian perfection they make out “that state of devotedness to God and his service required by the moral law,” and this same “moral law” does not require, according to Professor Finney, “the same degree of knowledge,” nor “the same amount of service,” nor “the same degree of love” that “we might have rendered, had we never sinned.” I shall resume the sub-

* Lecture I. Oberlin Evangelist, vol. ii, pp. 3, 4.

† See a communication from the synod of Genesee, dated Lockport, Oct., 1840. New-York Observer.

ject of the law upon a future occasion. My only object at present is, to present the peculiarities of the Oberlin system, not to controvert them, but to see wherein they differ from the Wesleyan theory.

The Oberlin divines have met with two classes of opponents. One, as Dr. Snodgrass and the Princeton Review, denies the *attainableness* of this state of perfection altogether in the present life. But Dr. Woods, Dr. Pond, the Biblical Repository, and the New-York Evangelist, admit the *attainableness*, but *deny the fact* of this perfection; or they admit that the perfection asserted by the Oberlin divines is *attainable*, but deny that any ever have attained it, or that any ever will hereafter attain it in this life. The following is Dr. Wood's position upon the subject:—

“Mr. Mahan represents it as a question on which his opinion differs from the one commonly entertained: ‘whether we *may* now, during the progress of the present life, attain to entire perfection in holiness.’ (Discourses, p. 15.) And in his second discourse he makes it his particular inquiry, *whether a state of complete holiness is attainable in the present life*. He informs us that he does not use the words *attainable* and *practicable* with reference merely or chiefly to our natural powers as intelligent, accountable agents, but with reference to the provisions of divine grace. And he lays it down as a truth, which distinguishes his system from the one generally held, that ‘complete holiness

is, in the highest and most common acceptance of the term, *attainable*.' And in the last number of the Repository, (p. 409,) he states it as a point peculiar to him and his party, 'that we *may* render to God the perfect obedience which he requires.' But we hold to this as much as he does, and, as I suppose, on the same conditions; that is, we *may* render perfect obedience, if we apply ourselves to the work *as we ought*, and *fully avail ourselves* of the gracious provisions of the gospel. He surely would not say that we may render perfect obedience in any other way.

"I must therefore protest here, as I did in the former case, against Mr. Mahan's claiming that, as belonging peculiarly and exclusively to him, and to those who agree with him, which belongs equally to others. We hold, as decidedly as he does, that, in the common acceptance of the term, complete holiness is *attainable* in the present life. When we assert that a thing is *attainable*, or *may* be attained, our meaning is, that a proper use of means will secure it; that we shall obtain it, if we do what we ought; and that, if we fail of obtaining it, truth will require us to say we *might* have obtained it, and that our failure was owing altogether to our own fault. The *attainableness* of anything surely does not mean the same thing as its being *actually obtained*. For it is very common to speak of many things—for example, the improvement of the mind, and a state of competence—as things which are *attainable*, or which

may be obtained, but which never are obtained. The same as to the blessings of the gospel. Mr. Mahan would doubtless say, as others do, that salvation is *attainable* by all who hear the gospel; that under the dispensation of grace, any and all sinners *may* be saved; meaning, that means and opportunities are provided: that the way is prepared; that salvation is freely offered to them on the most reasonable terms; that a proper conduct on their part will secure the blessing, and that if they do not obtain it, they themselves, and they only, will be the faulty cause of the failure. When we say a thing is *not attainable*, we mean that, whatever we may do, we cannot obtain it, and that our failing to obtain it will not be owing to any misconduct or neglect on our part. It is often and truly represented, that impenitent sinners, at the judgment day, will have the painful reflection that the blessedness of heaven was offered to them, and was put within their reach—that they *might* have been saved, but refused the infinite good.”*

This is considered by Dr. Snodgrass and the Princeton Review on the one hand, and by the Oberlin divines on the other, “as virtually giving up the matter in dispute.” And I see no reason for a doubt upon the subject. The simple question between the Reformed and the Remonstrants, and between Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher, and Messrs. Hill, Toplady, Mar-

* An Examination of the Doctrine of Perfection, pp. 26-28.

tin, and others, was the *attainableness of a state of evangelical perfection in the present life*. For maintaining the affirmative of this question, Arminians have been considered heterodox, and branded with the offensive epithet of *perfectionists*. But it seems the Andover professor can take the position that "perfect conformity to the moral law" *is attainable in this life*, and be no perfectionist at all. The position of the good doctor and his coadjutors does really entitle them to a large share of the obloquy which orthodox Calvinists have ever heaped upon Arminians for the unpardonable sin of perfectionism; and in such company perhaps we should be content to suffer reproach, claiming however exemption from the charge of holding to the attainableness of *legal perfection*, a crime that Dr. Woods openly and explicitly confesses.

The doctor goes further, and maintains, "that devout Christians and orthodox divines have, in all ages, maintained this precious doctrine."* Now here we must proceed with caution. Let it be noticed that the learned professor is speaking of *legal perfection*, for such he understands to be the perfection maintained by President Mahan. With this understanding we demur to the declaration. A careful historical investigation of the subject will show, as clear as light, that none but Pelagians, Romanists, Anabaptists, Ranters, &c., ever "maintained this doc-

* An Examination of the Doctrine of Perfection, page 15.

trine.”* A *perfection* which consists in *perfect conformity to the original law* has ever been denied by “devout Christians and orthodox divines.” The evidence is abundant that this doctrine was denied and controverted by all the reformers, by the Reformed churches, by the Remonstrants, and by Mr. Wesley and his co adjutors.

But if the doctor, by “orthodox divines,” means Calvinistic divines, his assertion is most palpably erroneous: for these divines, from the days of the great Genevan reformer down to the present time, have explicitly denied the attainableness in this life of the perfection required both by the *law* and by the *gospel*, and have, on the other hand, asserted the necessary continuance of sin in believers until death.

Calvin says: “There never has been a saint who, surrounded with a body of death, *could* attain to such a degree of love, as to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind.”†

Witseus says: “We are not to imagine that any one in this life *can* attain to that perfection which the law of God requires, that, living without all sin, he should wholly employ himself in the service of God.”‡

Mr. Romaine, in speaking of “the experience of every true believer,” says: “He desires to

* See the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th lectures of the larger work.

† Institutes, book ii, chap. vii, sec. 5.

‡ Economy of the Covenants, vol. ii, pp. 55, 56.

keep his thoughts from wandering ; he would have his whole heart engaged in the duty, but he *cannot*.”*

Mr. Toplady says : “ Such being the unrelaxing perfection which the law inflexibly requires, it necessarily follows that the supposition of *possible* perfection on earth is the most fanatic dream, and the most gigantic delusion which can whirl the brain of a human being.”†

Dr. John Dick says : “ The *possibility* of perfection in the present state could be conceived only by men who were ignorant of the Scripture and of themselves. They must first have lowered the standard of holiness. They must have narrowed and abated the demands of the divine law to meet their fancied attainments.”‡

Rev. Charles Buck says : “ There is a perfection of *degrees*, by which a person performs all the commands of God, with the full exertion of all his powers, without the least defect. This is what the law of God requires, but what the saints *cannot* attain to in this life.”§

In addition to these authorities, I give the Westminster divines, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. The language adopted by the latter from the former is as follows :—“ Q. 149. *Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God ?* A. No man is able, either of himself, or by any grace received

* Treatise on Faith, p. 376.

† Works of Aug. Toplady, p. 141.

‡ Theology, vol. ii, p. 242.

§ Theological Dictionary ; article, Perfection

in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God ; but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.”*

Need I multiply passages from those whom Dr. Woods will not hesitate to acknowledge as “orthodox divines,” to prove that he has taken an untenable position, when he claims for the admission of the *attainableness* of this perfection the common consent of evangelical Christians ? Until the learned professor shall review his ground, and correct himself, he stands in an unenviable position. His facts are wholly unsupported, and his system, as a whole, liable to more objections, and has less support from the Scriptures, the formularies of faith adopted by Protestant churches, and the published opinions of “orthodox divines” of all ages, than almost any other system of perfection which has ever been given to the world.

Did Dr. Woods and those who agree with him entertain the right notions of *Christian perfection*, we might well rejoice in their admission of its *attainableness*. But holding, as they do, to a *legal perfection*, the very theory which has always been opposed by orthodox Protestants, upon mature consideration of the matter I have come to the conclusion, for myself, that it is no special cause of joy to the believers in the doctrine of *evangelical perfection*.† The temper,

* Larger Catechism.

† Not having then so fully investigated the character of the perfection which Dr. W. had in view, I was led on a former occasion to regard his concession in too fa-

however, in which Dr. Woods writes is most kind—characterized by Christian meekness and charity.

But for the *logic* of this writer I cannot speak in so favorable terms. How the learned professor could persuade himself that he was doing justice to his opponent, when he applied his arguments to a proposition which he had not attempted to prove, is to me wholly unaccountable. Mr. Mahan had introduced numerous Scripture proofs, that a state of Christian perfection is attainable in this life. Dr. Woods seems to think that he has fully and logically refuted Mr. Mahan, when he has shown, by a labored argument, that these arguments do not “certainly prove that believers *will ever* be completely sanctified.” All this, constituting nearly one half of his reply, is as clear an instance of the sophism *Ignoratio Elenchi*, a *misapprehension of the question*, as can easily be found in the productions of any sophist. In this I must not be understood as interfering in the controversy between these gentlemen. I am not the apologist or defender of either one or the other, but a simple reporter of facts as they present themselves to my own mind.

How far the views of the Oberlin divines upon the metaphysical distinction so generally received by Calvinistic theologians between *natural* and *moral* ability go to modify their views of the subject of Christian perfection, I cannot say. It is a very favorable light. See Methodist Quarterly Review, vol. i, p. 317.

shall not attempt to determine.* So far as I have been able to find, they are sufficiently explicit upon the necessity of *direct divine influ-*

* Since writing the above, several late numbers of the Oberlin Evangelist have fallen in my way, which I had not before seen. In these Professor Finney presents views which are not only novel and eccentric, but several of them exceedingly objectionable. In a sermon by the professor,^a "moral ability," "natural ability," and "gracious ability," are pronounced "distinctions" absolutely "nonsensical." As to the distinction of President Edwards, referred to in the text, and quite generally adopted by Calvinistic divines, this gentleman sustains the following propositions:—"Their *natural ability* is no ability at all—their *natural inability*, so far as morality or virtue is concerned, is no inability at all—their *moral ability* is no ability at all—their *moral inability* is an absolute *natural inability*." This, I suppose, will be quite sufficient evidence that he has broken loose from the trammels of new divinity in more points than one. But while he repudiates this cherished distinction of moral and natural ability, he is equally strong in his objections against the Arminian theory of *gracious ability*. This kind of ability he undertakes to prove "has no grace whatever in it." The reasoning by which he does this is perfectly sophistical. The gist of the argument is contained in the following:—"It is a first truth of reason, that moral obligation implies the possession of every kind of ability which is indispensable to render the required act possible. For example, if God requires me to fly, he must furnish me wings." In this way he makes it a matter of mere "*justice*" on God's part to give the power to do what he requires. The most charitable construction which can be put upon this argument is, that the preacher had so completely lost himself in a labyrinth of metaphysical speculations, as unintentionally to have reversed the regular order of antecedent and sequence.

We suppose, in the economy of grace, man is first

^a Vol. iv, No. 18. August 31, 1842.

ence in the actual accomplishment of the work of sanctification. I give the following from President Mahan as specimens :—

“ We learn how to understand and apply such declarations of Scripture as the following :— ‘ Wash you, make you clean ;’ ‘ Make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit ;’ ‘ Let us

restored to a new probation, and this new probation implies the means necessary to meet the conditions of the new covenant. The conditions required are based upon the provisions of this covenant. These provisions imply all the power, and gracious aid, necessary to enable man to comply fully with its terms. Now, is there no grace in placing the human family in a condition in which salvation is possible ? Is there no grace in putting eternal life within their reach ?

But the professor urges that “ *justice* does demand that a moral being should possess the requisite ability, whatsoever that is, to do and be what he is commanded to do and be.” This would be a logical argument upon the supposition that God first commanded man to repent and believe the gospel, before any such thing as a gospel existed. In such a case we should naturally enough conclude that a gospel must then be provided to be believed, or the sinner could not be justly condemned for disobedience to the command. But this supposition has no foundation in fact. It is a mere phantom. It is reversing the natural order of things. Indeed, the argument by which the professor undertakes to prove the theory of *gracious* ability “ nonsensical ” is a perfect fallacy, and is as fairly entitled to be characterized by his own favorite epithets, “ absurd and nonsensical,” as can well be imagined. The new covenant is a covenant of *grace* ;—its provisions are *gracious* provisions ;—the ability to avail ourselves of these provisions is *gracious* ability ;—the whole superstructure, from the foundation to the head-stone, is *grace*—*grace* !

cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,' &c. The common impression seems to be, that men are required to do all this, in the exercise of their own unaided powers; and because the sinner fails to comply, grace comes in, and supplies the condition in the case of Christians. Now, I suppose that all such commands are based upon the provisions of divine grace. The sinner is not required to 'make himself clean,' or to 'make to himself a new heart,' in the exercise of his unaided powers, but by application to the blood of Christ, 'which cleanseth from all sin.' The grace which purifieth the heart is provided; the fountain, whose waters cleanse from sin, is set open. To this fountain the creature is brought, and because he may descend into it, and there 'wash his garments and make them white,' he is met with the command, 'Wash you, make you clean,' 'make to yourself a new heart and a new spirit,' and 'cleanse yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.' The sinner is able to make to himself a 'new heart and a new spirit,' because he can instantly avail himself of proffered grace. He does literally* 'make to himself a new heart and a new spirit,' when he yields himself up to the influence of that grace. The power to cleanse from sin lies in the blood and grace of Christ; and hence, when the sinner 'purifies himself by obeying the truth through

* I would rather say, he does *in some sense* make to himself a new heart. The expression in the text implies too much.

the Spirit,' the glory of his salvation belongs, not to him, but to Christ."*

"I would here say, that I have for ever given up all idea of resisting temptation, subduing any lust, appetite, or propensity, or of acceptably performing any service for Christ, by the mere force of my own resolutions. If my propensities, which lead to sin, are crucified, I know that it must be done by an indwelling Christ. If I overcome the world, this is to be the victory, 'even our faith.' If the great enemy is to be overcome, it is to be done 'by the blood of the Lamb.'"[†]

* Scripture Doctrine, pp. 91, 92.

[†] Scripture Doctrine, pp. 189, 190. This, it would seem, is a clear declaration of entire dependence on *divine influence* for the efficiency in the great work of sanctification. But Professor Finney's commentary puts another face upon the whole matter. He says: "The atonement and divine influence were not necessary to make men *able* to do their duty, but to induce in them a willingness to do it."^a The influence used by God in the whole work of salvation, according to this gentleman, is nothing more than "exerting influence over mind by and through the presentation of truth to the mind." This he calls "a divine moral suasion."^b Mr. Finney says: "With many, to deny a physical divine influence in regeneration, to deny that the Spirit of God is employed to make men able, and [to hold,] that he only employs his agency in persuading them to be willing, is to deny the divine agency altogether." And then adds: "What do they mean? I am afraid of these men." Ah! my dear sir, and I am sorry to be obliged to say, that "these men" have no little reason to be "afraid of" *you*—afraid lest you should spoil others, as I fear you have spoiled yourself, with your vain philosophy, or ultra speculations.

^a Oberlin Evangelist, vol. iv, No. 18.

^b Ibid.

It is often asked, with no little solicitude, Do the Oberlin divines receive the true Wesleyan doctrine of evangelical perfection? Is there any real difference between them and the Methodist standards upon the subject? I feel compelled to meet this question; and yet I fear I may not be fully understood, and that what I shall say may offend against some of the generation of God's dear children. I must, notwithstanding, make an effort to do justice to the question, though I can devote to it but a small space.

1. Be it observed, that a portion of the phraseology employed by these writers comes very near the Wesleyan view. Such is the following: "Perfection in holiness implies a full and perfect discharge of our entire duty, of all existing obligations in respect to God and all other beings.—It is 'loving God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and our neighbor as ourselves.' It implies the entire absence of all sinfulness, and the presence and all-pervading influence of pure and perfect love—the consecration of the whole being to God," &c. And the illustrations of this doctrine, and the arguments employed to prove it, are generally the same as are employed by us. And,

2. Much that they say upon the negative, viz., what Christian perfection is not, is in perfect accordance with the language of our standards.

3. But when they speak of perfection as

“perfect obedience to the moral law,” they leave the Wesleyan phraseology. I do not pretend to say precisely what they mean by this language, only that it is language *we* do not use; and, as it is generally understood, it is language which does not convey our notion of Christian perfection.*

* Still another objectionable feature in the Oberlin theology is, that it makes Christian perfection to consist in “disinterested benevolence,” and this is something either wholly unintelligible or grossly absurd. The following are Professor Finney’s explanations of this doctrine:—“If he [God] send your companions or children to hell, you will be under obligations to praise him for it. If he send your children, or even yourself to hell, you will be under an eternal obligation to praise him for it. It will always be true that he did it because it was right, because the public good demanded it, and it was therefore his duty to do it.”^a Again he says: “If the rule of right, if the highest good of the universe, demand that you be sent to hell, it is God’s duty to send you there, and you have no right to object, but are bound to consent with all your heart.”^b It has now, it would seem, come to this:—that when you are prepared “to consent with all your heart” that God “should send your companions, your children, or even yourself, to hell,” should “the rule of right, the highest good of the universe, demand” it, you have then attained to that “disinterested benevolence” which is the sum of Christian perfection! And we must believe, too, that “it is God’s *duty*” to do all this. The phraseology, perhaps, requires no remark. Assigning a ‘duty’ to God is as absurd as it is novel, and will find little favor.

This effort reduces a great practical truth to a mere speculation. And the speculation itself, as I said in the opening of this note, is either wholly unintelligible or

^a Oberlin Evangelist, vol. iv, No. 19.

^b Ibid.

4. When they urge that "the law cannot require us to love God or man as well as we might have been able to love them, had we always improved all our time in obtaining all the knowledge we could in regard to their nature, character, and interests,"—and that "the law of God does not imply or suppose that our powers are in a perfect state ; that our strength of body or mind is what it would have been, had we never sinned," &c. ; in all this they leave the Wesleyan track. Did they say this of the *gospel*, and not of the *law*, there would be no

grossly absurd. If the professor means that we must *now* be willing, should we *ultimately* prove unfaithful, that God should *finally* send us to hell, the great difficulty would be for most persons so to analyze their feelings as to be able to determine whether they had reached this point or not. Upon the first effort to do this they would be likely to find that they were not *willing to be damned, under any circumstances*. And if their hearts were right with God, they would most certainly be unwilling to prove unfaithful, and, associating unfaithfulness and perdition, they would feel an instinctive dread and abhorrence of both. What, then, must be done? Must they be told that they cannot truly say, "Thy will be done," and "everything short of this state of the will is rebellion," and consequently they are in the gall of bitterness?

But are we to understand that *now* being in a state of rebellion against God, and of course in the way to hell, we must *now* be willing that God should send us there, and when we are eternally damned, we are then "bound to consent with all our heart" to be so damned? The idea is revoltingly absurd. It is asserting that we are bound to do what, under the circumstances, is naturally and morally impossible. Is this the *perfection* of the gospel?

difference between us. All this is true of *the law of liberty*—of *the law of faith*—but we consider nothing of the kind can be said of the original law, without truly *lowering its claims*.

5. The phraseology here employed seems to tend toward a confounding of the law and the gospel—of the covenant of works and the covenant of grace ; and makes salvation predicable of obedience to the law, contrary to the doctrine of St. Paul. I now only speak of the logical tendency of the language employed by these writers, not pretending that they adopt what seems to me to be the legitimate consequence of their positions.

6. But let us not forget that these divines do not profess to be Methodists, nor to derive their doctrine or phraseology from Methodist standards. We consequently cannot find fault with them for using their own terms, or such language as they think best adapted to express the sense of the Scriptures upon the subject. And though we cannot adopt that portion of their phraseology excepted to, yet, so far as we can, we should be happy to agree with them, and extend to them our sympathies and our fellowship.

My object in these remarks, if I know my own heart, is truly kind and brotherly. I rejoice to believe, that whatever difference there may be between us in the modes of expression sometimes employed, there may be a perfect agreement as to the doctrine of Christian perfection, and also as to its experience and practical

influence.* By this exhibition of the difference between the Wesleyan and the Oberlin theories of perfection, I would answer three objects :

* So I charitably concluded, with all the light I then had ; but I am now compelled to fear the case is otherwise. In addition to the evidence of views radically defective which I have referred to in preceding notes, I will here give another instance. Professor Finney insists much that the state of mind which he calls Christian perfection is necessary to a state of gracious acceptance. In showing "what is implied in being willing that God should do right," the professor says : "It implies the spirit of perfect benevolence. No man is willing that God should in all things do right, who is not disinterestedly and perfectly benevolent."^a Next he attempts to prove that "this state of mind is indispensable to salvation ;" and under this head he says : "There cannot possibly be any virtue or holiness in one who is unwilling that God should in all things do right."^b Again : "Unless you are, according to your knowledge, as upright as God is, you are not willing he should do right, you are in rebellion against him, and cannot be in a state of justification with God."^c And in another place this author tells us explicitly, that "nothing short of that state of the will that is for the time being as perfectly conformed to the will of God as is the will of the inhabitants of heaven, can, by any possibility, be true religion."^d

Now, the logical conclusion from all this is, that a man is either "as perfectly conformed to the will of God as the inhabitants of heaven ;"—"according to his knowledge, as upright as God is ;"—or "there cannot possibly be any virtue or holiness in" him ;—he is "in rebellion against God, and cannot be in a state of justification." This, so far as I can see, annihilates the doctrine of Christian perfection at once. According to these views, no man can be a Christian at all, unless he is one in the highest sense possible. And of course, there are no Christians in the world, or Christian per-

^a Oberlin Evang., vol. iv, No. 19. ^b Ib. ^c Ib. ^d No. 15.

I would satisfy reasonable inquiries ; I would guard our own people against adopting hastily a phraseology which would make them inconsistent with themselves ; and I would invite a review and a more complete exposition of the points involved.

I must now close this lecture. The present state of the controversy may be gathered from the sequel of these lectures.

LECTURE V.

OBJECTIONS TO THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION CONSIDERED.

“Come now, and let us reason together.” Isa. i, 18.

THE purpose of this lecture shall be to examine several leading objections which are urged against the doctrine of Christian perfection.

1. It is urged that this doctrine is a part of the great heresy brought in by Pelagius, and cherished through the dark ages, and still rife in the Church of Rome.

fection is an attainment common to them all. This, I say, is sweeping away the doctrine of Christian perfection with a stroke. With these notions we can neither hold any fellowship nor make any compromise. And if this is the point to which the Oberlin divines have finally arrived, and if they have deliberately settled upon it, we must, though reluctantly, conclude, that after all they have said correctly upon the subject of Christian perfection, they have finally taken up views essentially defective, and views with which, as Wesleyans, we can have no sympathy.

In an article on "Christian Perfection" in "the Christian Review," published in Boston under the auspices of the Baptist denomination, we have these statements :—"Pelagianism produced perfectionism; perfectionism demands Pelagianism for its support; it can flourish in no other soil; it cannot be engrafted upon our evangelical scheme; it can derive thence no congenial nourishment; it may adhere for a while to the surface, but must ultimately be thrown off by the very action of vitality. Wherever we find it growing in luxuriance, we may therefore know the nature of the soil upon which we tread. Before the evangelical church can admit perfection into her creed, she must tear up from their old foundations some of her most important and long-cherished doctrines. She must modify her whole views of human depravity, of the nature of regeneration, of the Spirit's influence, and of the holiness of the divine law. She must allow either that grace is nothing but the free use of our faculties; or, that it is conferred according to human merit; and the final step must be to exchange the doctrine of justification by faith for that which teaches that there is no reconciliation to God without a perfect obedience to the law.—Doubtless, the advocates of perfectionism will not deny that they have adopted, in the main, the Pelagian scheme. Some additions there may be, but surely no improvement."*

It will be quite sufficient, in reply to this

* No. for June, 1842.

objection, to advert to the radical difference between the Pelagian and the Wesleyan theories. One presents a strictly *legal* perfection—perfect conformity to the law; while the other sets forth an evangelical perfection—perfect conformity to the terms of the gospel. One denies the doctrine of the native corruption of the human heart and the direct influences of the Spirit; while the other asserts these doctrines most explicitly and constantly. One holds that perfection may be attained through the efforts of mere natural ability; the other utterly rejects this doctrine, as contrary to God's word, and on the other hand steadily asserts that, so far from being able perfectly to keep the law through the force of our natural powers, we can absolutely do nothing good “without the grace of God by Christ preventing (or going before) us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.”* And finally, one system holds the merit of works; while the other denounces that doctrine as heretical, and predicates all hope upon the merits of Jesus Christ.

Now, in all candor, I ask any intelligent and unprejudiced person to point out the smallest family likeness between the two theories. I know they both employ the word *perfection*, and assert that it is in a sense predicable of man in his present state. And does not the Bible do the same? and are not our opponents compel-

* See Art. viii, Articles of Religion, Doctrine and Discipline of the M. E. Church.

led to admit it? Augustine and Turretin, and the reformers generally, do the same. All admit perfection in some sense. Is the Bible, then, a system of Pelagianism and Romanism? Were the reformers Pelagians and Romanists? Is Dr. Woods a Pelagian? The charge of Pelagianism does, indeed, on several points, in which Wesleyan Methodists totally disagree with him, seem to lie against the Andover professor. The perfection he admits is a *legal perfection*. And he maintains that we may attain this perfection by *natural ability*. Nor should it be forgotten that the "new school divines" generally, if I understand them, as clearly and as fully as did Pelagius himself, deny the doctrine of *hereditary depravity*, and assert that *all sin* consists in *voluntary action*. And I understand the Christian Review to follow in the wake of this class of divines.

Now, how well it becomes the gentlemen who hold these dogmas to charge Pelagianism upon us, I leave for the candid to judge. It is a cheap way to meet an opponent or put down a theory, to give it a bad name, or in some way bring it under public odium. It is, however, much more consistent with Christian candor, and with the principles of fair and honorable discussion, to meet what we would oppose upon the ground of its own merits; to direct our inquiries solely to the question, *Is it true?*—Upon this ground Wesleyan Methodists have never shrunk from the field of discussion. And whenever their opponents may wish to meet

them here, they will not find themselves in the quiet possession of the ground. We have learned "earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," and we shall probably continue to practice upon the lesson so often as need may require: always, however, allowing our opponents the liberty to think for themselves, though never the privilege of misrepresenting us. Now let the gentleman of the *Christian Review* fully understand that as Wesleyans we do most explicitly "deny" that we "have adopted in the main the Pelagian scheme." We also deny the smallest tendency in our system to that "scheme;" his confident assertion to the contrary notwithstanding.

2. It is objected that perfectionism is always identified with fanaticism. Instances in proof are given from the history and extravagance of the *Cathari** of primitive times, the *Anabaptists*, *Familists*, *Ranters*, &c.

* This is an appellation by which the Novatians of the third century were distinguished. This party was originated by Novatus, a presbyter of Africa, and Novatianus, a presbyter of Rome, who, it is alledged, by vile arts procured himself to be made a bishop. Their distinguishing doctrine was, "that the *lapsed* upon no conditions of repentance whatsoever ought to be received again into the peace and communion of the church." They inveighed, probably not without much reason, against the Catholics, as they called themselves, on account of the want of discipline, and separated themselves from those who had apostatized, and those who connived at them. They were finally excommunicated as heretics and schismatics. They were called, or, as my authority says, styled themselves, "*Cathari*, the pure, undefiled party."

Upon this objection I will make three observations. The *first* is, that there probably was some wheat among the chaff in all these classes of errorists ; how much, we can now scarcely tell, for they do not speak for themselves through the pages of history, but are generally reported by their enemies. *Secondly*. While they held many errors, they certainly held some

That Novatianus was not so bad a man as he is sometimes represented to have been, we may infer from what St. Cyprian says of him. He only charges him with *schism*, supposing this to be a sufficient reason for placing upon him the seal of reprobation. Says he : "As to the person of Novatianus, dearest brother, of whom you desire some account, and the heresy he has introduced, I must tell you, in the first place, that I don't look upon myself obliged to be very inquisitive what it is he teaches, since he teaches it in schism : for whoever he is, or however gifted, he is no Christian, I am sure, while he is not in the church of Christ. Let him value himself as much as he pleases, and pride himself in his philosophy and eloquence ; yet he who holds not to the brotherhood, and the unity of the church, has forfeited even all he was before."^a

Milner, after an examination of the subject at some length, comes to the following conclusions in relation to the *Cathari* :—"We seem, however, by comparing together several fragments of information, to have acquired some distinct ideas of these *Cathari* : they were a plain, unassuming, harmless, and industrious race of Christians, condemning, by their doctrine and manners, the whole apparatus of the reigning idolatry and superstition, placing true religion in the faith and love of Christ, and retaining a supreme regard for the divine word."^b

^a See Reeves's translation of the Apologies of Justin Martyr, &c., *note*, vol. ii, p. 360.

^b History of the Church, chap. iii, cent. xii.

truths ; and it is not to be presumed that, if they chanced to acknowledge some doctrine of the gospel, in consequence it thenceforth became vitiated. And *finally*. So far as the evidence of history speaks intelligibly, the perfection held by these fanatics, like that held by some of our own times, and in our own country, was either a *mystical* perfection, consisting in a fancied union with Christ, and a spiritual transformation to a sort of angelic nature, or an *Antinomian* perfection, which consists in the abrogation or destruction of all law, and a consequent exemption from its claims.*

So that to these classes of perfectionists Wesleyan Methodists hold as distant a relationship as they do to the various classes of Pelagians. Indeed, no stronger evidence of the truth of this conclusion can in reason be asked than that furnished by the writings of Mr. John Wesley. The perfection held by him is as consistent with a sound state of the mental faculties as it is productive of a sober and

* Perhaps I might safely have left the *Anabaptists* out of the question, as they will probably be safe in the hands of our friend of the *Christian Review*. Whether they were such *fanatics* and *perfectionists* as is pretended by some of the later reformers, and by several historians, is a matter of a little more interest to him than to me. It is, indeed, well for the church and the world, that the respectable denomination which claim to have descended from this class of Christians have retained their orthodox principles without inheriting their *fanaticism*, and especially that they totally discard the heresy of *perfectionism*, which, it is said, constituted so prominent a part of their creed.

devout life. Those who hold it may in some instances be fanatics, and so may those who hold any other doctrine of the Bible. For this we are not responsible, unless it can be shown that the doctrine as held by us legitimately tends to fanaticism.

3. It is alledged that this doctrine of perfection was opposed by the pious reformers, who asserted with one voice, "Perfection is not *attainable*: it is *impossible*."*

As to the reformers, their opposition was principally directed against a species of perfection that we have no more fellowship for than they had, or than our opponents now have. But the evidence is abundant that these writers after Augustine and Jerome, did admit a qualified perfection. Turretin admits several kinds of perfection; and Beza, in answer to the objection made to his argument against *legal* perfection, that "the faithful are said to be perfect in this life," says: "There is a twofold perfection; the one incomplete, the which is an endeavor or care to obey God in the observation of his precepts: the other is termed complete; this is the justice which the law requireth, namely, a perfect and absolute justice, according to that measure which man performed to God in his innocence. In the first sense the saints are said to be perfect, not in the last."† Now, what is all this but clearly asserting the doctrine of Christian perfection? And a vol-

* Christian Review, June, 1842, p. 242.

† Golden Chain, p. 190. 4to. 1597.

ume might easily be made of similar quotations from the same class of writers.

It is not pretended, however, that in their specific explanations the reformers give us the whole of the Wesleyan system upon the subject. But we think it no greater sin to differ from them in the mode of stating this doctrine, than when they follow Augustine, as most of those our opponents call *reformers* do, upon the subject of predestination, partial atonement, and unconditional perseverance. Upon all these points we choose to go to the Bible for our light.

4. It is asserted that perfection is not predicable of humanity in the present life. The weakness and frailties of human nature absolutely forbid it.

Let it be noted here, in the first place, that Wesleyan Methodists do not hold a perfection which excludes the infirmities of human nature, and which implies perfect obedience to the Adamic law; but the perfection they hold excludes the *turpitude* of human nature, and implies *loving God with all the heart*. This qualification, however, avails nothing with our opponents, for they consider the loving God with all the heart the same thing as perfect and un-sin-ning obedience to the original law of purity, and of course deny the one as strongly as they do the other.

Calvin says: "Our assertion, respecting the impossibility of observing the law, must be briefly explained and proved; for it is generally esteemed a very absurd sentiment, so that

Jerome has not scrupled to denounce it as accursed. What was the opinion of Jerome I regard not; let us inquire what is truth. I shall not here enter into a long discussion of the various species of possibility: I call that impossible which has never happened yet, and which is prevented by the ordination and decree of God from ever happening in future. If we inquire from the remotest period of antiquity, I assert that there never has existed a saint who, surrounded with a body of death, could attain to such a degree of love as to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind; and, moreover, that there never has been one who was not the subject of some inordinate desire.”*

From this passage it appears clearly that Calvin denied the *practicability* of perfect obedience to the law of love. Dr. Woods admits the *practicability* of this obedience, but denies the *fact* that any ever have attained, or ever will attain, to such obedience. But the great Genevan denies both; and, in direct contradiction of Dr. Woods and other new-divinity writers, “calls that *impossible* which has never happened yet, and which is *prevented by the ordination and decrees of God.*” In this respect I conceive the great master far more consistent than his disciples. But I must not dwell here.

My object in introducing this passage at present is to present fairly, and from the highest authority, the proposition which I intend to con-

* Institutes, book ii, chap. vii, sec. 5.

trovert ; that is, “that *there never has existed a saint who, surrounded with a body of death, COULD attain to such a degree of love as to love God with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his mind.*”

I suppose that the heart, soul, mind, and strength, embrace the whole intellectual and moral man—the intellect, sensibilities, and the will, and that our capability to love God is co-extensive with these powers and susceptibilities of the mind : that capability implies power or ability ; and that we *can* do anything that we have power or ability to do. Consequently, to say that a man *cannot* love God with all his heart, &c., is the same as to say that he cannot love God with all his power, or ability, which is the same as to say that a man has power to love God, and has not power to love God—or that he can love God, and that he cannot love God at the same time, which is a contradiction. If the assertion were that no man can love God with *more* than all his heart, no one would object—this would not in the least conflict with our hypothesis. Evangelical Arminians hold that the gospel requires of us, as a condition of salvation, just the amount of holiness and obedience which answers to our divinely aided powers—that is, just so much as we are able to attain—and no more. And it seems extremely absurd to say that we “cannot” attain to that. Let those who relish such absurdities maintain them ; but surely the attempt to refute them would be unnecessary.

5. It is objected that there are no examples of this perfection in the history of man since the fall.

In answer to this objection it may be observed, first, that if the fact asserted in the objection were conceded, the *attainableness* of perfection might still be maintained; for to prove anything attainable we are not bound to prove that some one has attained it: though, on the other hand, proving that some one has attained to a state, proves also that it is attainable. And the fact that perfect Christians are recognized in the Scriptures, has generally, in this discussion, been adduced in proof of the attainableness of Christian perfection; for it is a necessary logical consequence, that if any have attained to this state, others similarly circumstanced may make the attainment. The objection then is wholly irrelevant, and may be left here. But as the fact of the existence of perfect Christians is a valid affirmative argument on our side, I shall resume the consideration of it when I come to adduce proof positive of the proposition, that Christian perfection is attainable in this life.

6. It is objected, that “the *nearer* Christians arrive to perfection in the present world, *the further they seem to themselves to be from it.*”*

No wonder the author of this objection thinks “this may appear paradoxical to some.” I presume it would appear so to himself, if his vision were not obscured by the mist of prejudice. His

* Dr. Pond. See Biblical Repository, vol. i, p. 54.

cases are not to the point ; they only prove that when a person is divinely enlightened, his self-righteousness leaves him. He had previously thought himself very good ; but now he sees himself as he is. But supposing him to proceed from this point ; to leave "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," and "go on to perfection," does he seem to himself every moment to recede from it ? When St. Paul said, "Forgetting the things which are behind, I press toward the mark," &c., did he seem to himself to be going back ? I doubt this. And though I do not question that the holier men are here, the more they see and feel their dependence, and the more they loath and abhor themselves ; yet it is not so plain to me that they do not make *sensible* advances ; that their faith is not strengthened, their hopes brightened, and their joys enhanced in proportion as they advance in holiness.

7. It is objected that we hasten the work of sanctification to too sudden a conclusion.

The Christian Review says : " We have supposed that Christian growth, like physical, must be gradual ; that the believer goes from strength to strength, and from grace to grace ; that, in the progress of religion within him, he gains victory after victory over self and sin, and tramples in the dust one spiritual foe after another, until he comes to the measure of the stature of the fullness of his Lord. We had supposed it unsafe to affirm that any evil passion was wholly crushed, which circumstances

might resuscitate. 'The sleeping lion may rush again from the lair, where he lay calm and still, as if he had been dead. But if Mr. Wesley's theory be true, we have found a royal road to holiness.'*

Our objector does well in supposing a growth in holiness, and that the Christian "gains victory after victory"—all this is true, and as true of a person wholly sanctified as of any one else. But as to his "sleeping lion," there is a little more doubt. Mr. Toplady says, "I do not know whether the strivings of inherent corruption for mastery be not frequently more violent in a regenerate person than even one who is dead in trespasses: as wild beasts are sometimes the more rampant and furious for being wounded."†

Mr. Toplady supposes "inbred corruption in a regenerate person" to be "wounded" indeed, but still "rampant and furious;" but our reviewer represents it as only *asleep*—lying "calm and still as if it had been dead." But neither of these views seems to answer to those of the apostle, who says, "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Rom. vi, 6. Here the *beast* is neither quietly *asleep*, nor *rampant* and *furious*, but *crucified*. The lion is wounded indeed, but it is with so deep and deadly a thrust that he is struggling in the agonies of death. The body of sin is not merely put to sleep or bound with

* No. xxviii, p. 412. † Caveat—Works, p. 321.

cords, but *nailed to the cross*, where mortality is rapidly carrying on its work.

As to this "royal road to holiness," a few remarks may be proper. The notions sustained by the objector are, that it must be *a long time* ere the Christian can attain to entire holiness : or, "Christian growth, like physical, must be gradual." The fact is in a sense true ; but it does not prove his point. We make no question as to the gradual growth of a Christian, either before or after his entire sanctification, but acknowledge and maintain the fact in relation to both periods. But the question we raise is, whether the body of sin in the Christian must necessarily *live*, and, if it is not "rampant and furious," at least be asleep, "calm and still," as long as he lives :—whether the work of destruction upon the members of this body must be slow, and of long continuance. Now, if this is so, there would be likely to be some Scripture warrant for the conclusion. But we know of no such warrant. On the contrary, the imagery employed to illustrate the progress and consummation of this work generally implies rapidity and dispatch.

The process of *mortification* is employed to illustrate the process of entire sanctification : "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth." Col. iii, 5. "If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom. viii, 13. Now, let mortification begin in a member of the human body, and, if not arrested, it very soon completes its work.

The process is not slow and long, continuing for years.

Again, the process of *death by crucifixion* is employed in like manner to represent the process of the death of our corruptions: "Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed." Rom. vi, 6. Now, but a few hours are necessary for the consummation of the process of crucifixion, and it *could* not, in the nature of the case, be *protracted*.

Cleansing the leper seems to be employed in the same way: "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean." Psa. li, 7. This process, too, was short, occupying, inclusive of all the ceremonies prescribed, but a few days.

The process of *refining metals* is employed to the same purpose: "I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin." Isa. i, 25. This, I need not say, is not a long and tedious process, but is soon accomplished.

Lastly, the process of *leaven working in a mass of meal* is employed to represent the process of transforming the heart: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Matt. xiii, 33. This process, as in all the preceding cases, is very soon completed.

Now it is very probable our reviewer would have selected another class of figures to represent the progress of the work of sanctification. Mr. Toplady has an illustration which would

doubtless suit him much better. He says, "Naturalists tell us that the oak is a full century in growing to a state of maturity : yet, though perhaps the slowest, it is one of the noblest, the strongest, and the most useful trees in the world. How preferable to the flimsy, watery, shooting willow!"* And lest the oak should too soon come to maturity, it might, forsooth, be best to have worms breed in its roots, and "snakes and toads nestle" in its heart !

But seriously, I am afraid of these illustrations. For in the first place, they are not taken from the Scriptures : and in the next place, I fear they may have a tendency too much to retard the work of sanctification. If the reviewer is fearful lest we should bring forward this work too rapidly, I confess my fear is lest he should make it progress too slowly ; or, by preventing all growth, should destroy it altogether—which may God, in his mercy, prevent !

8. It is objected that the tendency of the doctrine of Christian perfection is decidedly injurious to the interests of true religion. The Princeton Review holds the following language upon the subject :—

"Perfectionism, indeed, can never bear a rigid and impartial scrutiny, as to its visible effects, any more than as to the radical principles which produce them. Its grapes, however beautiful in the eye of the distant or cursory spectator, are still the grapes of Sodom ; and its clusters are the clusters of Gomorrah. In

* Caveat—Works, p. 321.

proportion to the developments which are made, new evidence is afforded, that this heresy, however diversified, or modified by circumstances, is everywhere the same in its essential features, and in its tendency; arrayed alike against evangelical doctrine and order; fostering fanaticism and spiritual pride; and, whether it nominally acknowledge or reject the ordinances of the gospel, taking away the grounds which support them, and robbing them of the salutary influence which, in their legitimate use, they are adapted and designed to exert.”*

This is said in immediate connection with several severe charges against the Oberlin professors, but, it would seem, is designed for general application, as the reviewer refers it to the “heresy, however diversified, or modified by circumstances.” So far as the reviewer would bring his charges to bear upon the Wesleyan theory of perfection, perhaps we may safely leave it to God and the world to judge whether “its grapes are the grapes of Sodom; and its clusters the clusters of Gomorrah.” Indeed, I should not fear much to leave it to the candor of the reviewer himself to judge of the justice of his own charges, if he would take the trouble to acquaint himself accurately with the practical influence of this doctrine among the Methodists. It is lamentable to see a writer of so much power as this reviewer evidently is, close his eyes and strike at random. But we

* No. for July, 1842, p. 470.

must forgive him, for he means well, though he does an act of cruel injustice.

I would here beg leave to oppose to the sweeping censures of the Review the opinions of the celebrated Alexander Knox, who was no Methodist, but had the candor to give even Methodists their due. In his correspondence with Bishop Jebb, Letter xviii, he says, "In fact, I do think, that to err on the side of good nature will always be safest; and besides, I am persuaded, that the Methodists, as a body—the Wesleyans, I mean—deserve far more credit for what they believe rightly, than censure for what they think erroneously. And particularly their doctrine of perfection, in my mind, merits peculiar delicacy of treatment: the truth and excellence of it being most substantial; and the fault of it being, rather infelicity of expression, and misconception about some circumstances, than any radically false view."

And in Letter xix he resumes the subject; and though the letter was not finished, his judgment upon the subject is clearly expressed, and in language, too, which shows most conclusively that it was not made up in the dark. Thus he proceeds:—

"I would ask any person of seriousness and candor, who knows well the ecclesiastical history of Britain during the by-past century, where would, or what would, our religion at this day be, if the Methodists had not made their appearance? With all their foibles, I own I think they have been grand instruments of

good, far beyond the limits of their own societies. I feel this, I hope, not without gratitude to the Author and Giver of all good things; and, therefore, am most cordially disposed myself, and cannot avoid persuading others, to deal gently and indulgently with them. Not, surely, to overlook their errors; but to touch them with all possible mildness, so as to compel, both themselves, and all others, to feel that it was love of truth alone, and not any unkind temper, which dictated the censure.

“But I have another motive for such caution respecting the Wesleyan Methodists; and that is, that I really do think them so wonderfully right, in most of their views, as to render them, on the whole, much more the object of my estimation than my blame. Nay, the very point you look at in them—I mean, their view of Christian perfection—is, in my mind, so essentially right and important, that it is on this account, particularly, I value them above other denominations of that sort. I am aware that ignorant and rash individuals expose what is in itself true, by their unfounded pretensions and irrational descriptions; but, with the sincerest disapproval of every such excess, I do esteem John Wesley’s stand for holiness to be that which does immortal honor to his name. And I am assured, too, that, while numbers in the Methodist society abuse his doctrine, (to which his stress on sudden revolutions in the mind has, I think, contributed,) perhaps a still greater number (but a great number, I am sure) are ex-

cited, by what he has taught, to such inward and outward strictness, such deep self-denial, and such substantial piety and spirituality, as are scarcely to be found in any other society. In John Wesley's views of Christian perfection are combined, in substance, all the sublime morality of the Greek fathers, the spirituality of the mystics, and the divine philosophy of our favorite Platonists. Macarius, Fenelon, Lucas, and all of their respective classes, have been consulted and digested by him; and his ideas are, essentially, theirs. But his merit is, (after all just allowances for mixtures of the fanatical kind,) that he has popularized these sublime lessons in such a manner, in his and his brother's hymns, that he . . . (*Unfinished.*)”*

The *abuses* of the doctrine, referred to by Mr. Knox, it is highly probable, were real, and they might, indeed, have originated from a misconception of Mr. Wesley's views of “sudden revolutions in the mind.” But no one was more ready to detect and correct these errors than was Mr. Wesley himself. We do not deny but the same species of fanaticism which was so troublesome to the founder of Methodism is sometimes found among the Methodists in our own country in connection with strong professions of holiness. I have not the least disposition to conceal or disguise any facts of this kind. But cannot these things be accounted

* See *Thirty Years' Correspondence between John Jebb, &c., and Alexander Knox, &c.*, vol. i, pp. 98, 100. 101.

for without reckoning them the legitimate fruits of our views of Christian perfection? A little examination will, I think, in all such cases, trace the source of these aberrations to the faults of the mental constitution, the education, or the habits of the subject. I am happy also to say, in this connection, that I see no disposition in the Methodist ministry, or the great mass of the people, to foster, or even to tolerate, such instances of fanaticism. They are, consequently, with us, "like angels' visits, few and far between."

9. It is objected, "That to suppose the state in question to be attainable, would be to suppose that which would *disagree* with a variety of *known* and *acknowledged facts*."

This objection is given in the words of *Dr. Snodgrass*, who sustains it by several particulars, which I shall now proceed to examine.

1. The learned doctor says: "It is a fact, that the strongest representations of *Christian experience and practice*, which are found in the Bible, are those which expressly exclude the notion of sinless perfection in this life, and include the idea of an onward movement to still higher degrees of proficiency and success."*

This argument proceeds upon the assumption that a state of entire sanctification admits of no *advancement*. Whether this is true or not of the theory *Dr. Snodgrass* more particularly opposes, I shall not be careful to inquire, but shall show,

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, p. 70.

in few words, that it is not true in relation to the theory sustained in these lectures.

It will be remembered that we have found sanctification to imply both the *death of sin* and the *life of righteousness*. And when we speak of entire sanctification, as to the former part of it, we say it may be attained *at once*—*it is an instantaneous work*—and we are authorized to look for its accomplishment *now*. And it must be admitted, that when this work is accomplished, it cannot in all future time be *more* than accomplished. But in relation to the latter part of this great work, viz., the life of righteousness, embracing *all holy affections* and *pious efforts*, it is regarded as entirely *progressive*. There never will be during our earthly pilgrimage, and probably during eternity itself, a point at which the redeemed soul will have reached a height of holiness which precludes further improvement. The destruction of sin in the soul, and the growth of holiness, are two distinct things, though inseparably joined together, and, united, constitute the grand divisions of the great work of entire sanctification. The one is instantaneous, the other gradual; and hence it is that we sometimes say, with propriety, that the work of entire sanctification is both gradual and instantaneous. So by a careful analysis of the subject, the theory is rescued from apparent contradiction. The objection then has no force against the Wesleyan theory.

2. "It is a fact, that *there is no degree of piety or holy living, in this world, beyond which*

Christians are exempted from AFFLICTIONS or TRIALS; such exemption is neither contemplated in the word of God, nor realized in actual experience: and yet, nothing short of this would be suitable to a state of entire sanctification.”*

It would be all that in justice could be demanded of us to show that we hold to the attainableness of no such state of perfection in this life as would exempt the possessor “from *afflictions or trials*.” And indeed I know not that such a state is held by any one in his right senses. If the objection has any force, it must be upon the supposition that afflictions are in all cases to be regarded as a punishment for existing turpitude. And this, indeed, seems to be the ground assumed by the objector. “All suffering,” says he, “of every kind, is the associate of sin.”† We freely admit, that suffering had never entered the system but for sin, and that sin is, in a sense, the cause of all suffering. But this by no means authorizes the conclusion that no one of the family of man can be freed from the guilt and the pollutions of sin without exemption from the physical evils to which humanity is heir, and which are entailed upon man while in this mortal state. I see no such conclusion legitimately following the premises. If, indeed, the objection be well-founded, how did it happen that Christ “was in all points tempted [and afflicted otherwise] like as we are, and yet without sin?”

* Page 76.

† Page 79.

3. "It is a fact, that *all Christians are directed to use THE MEANS of sanctification, as long as they live*: there is no degree of holiness, in this life, supposed, in the word of God, to be attainable, beyond which they are represented as needless."*

Here the gentleman beats a creature of his own imagination. Who holds a state of sanctification that renders the means of further improvement, and of security against temptation, entirely nugatory? If any entertain this notion, certainly we do not. In answer to a former objection, I have shown that the state of entire sanctification is a state of indefinite progression, and certainly *means* are appropriate, at least while we continue to be acted upon and moved forward in our duty by the ordinary stimulants and influences. In his amplification the gentleman proceeds:—

"In view of the Christian life, considered as a warfare, believers are exhorted, in common, to 'fight the good fight of faith'—to 'put on the whole armor of God'—to 'be sober'—to 'stand fast' and quit themselves like men—having their 'loins girt about with truth'—their 'feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace'—and their whole persons guarded by 'the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' And do these sound like addresses to an army, some of whom have fought all their battles, have conquered all their enemies, have placed their feet upon the neck

* Page 80.

of their last foe, and are ready to begin the celebration of the victory? Or, do they proceed upon the supposition, that the war is still in progress—that the armor is still needed—and, that other triumphs over the foe are still to be sought?”*

I wonder if the blessed Saviour had no conflicts with the powers of hell? Did he not maintain a conflict with the “devil” for “forty days in the wilderness?” And was he not assaulted upon “the pinnacle of the temple?” And was he not free from sin notwithstanding? And must the saints suffer the devil to occupy a part of their hearts, in order to afford them an opportunity to exercise their graces? Can there be no “warfare” without the remains of sin in the heart? This is strange, to be sure. I always supposed it was one thing to have the unclean spirit expelled, and another to keep him out. And as we believe in no state of perfection in this life from which we are not liable to fall, and none that is not subject to the fiercest conflicts with the grand adversary of souls, the objection is, as far as our theory is concerned, utterly without force.

4. “It is a fact, that, in the present world, *there are none who either do, or can, arrive at a PERFECT KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH*; and as sanctification is *through* the truth, it is not easy to see, under these circumstances, how any can be perfectly holy.”†

Now this objection proceeds, so far as it has

* Page 83.

† Pages 83, 84.

any application to the Wesleyan theory, upon the assumption that "*perfect knowledge*" is necessary to *perfect love*. This we deny. We do not at all question but the perfection of knowledge to which we shall attain in heaven will be the means of greatly augmenting our love and our happiness. But not holding a perfection that admits of no increase, we do not feel the force of the objection. What prevents a sanctified soul, though he *knows* "*but in part,*" of giving to God his little all? Because his power to love God, when he comes to heaven, is to be inconceivably greater than it now is, can he not now lay out the *whole amount* of the small stock of power he has? Alas for us! if this is legitimate reasoning upon the "great and precious promises" of God's word!

5. "It is a fact, that, *while Christians remain in the present world, they will have* CORRUPTIBLE BODIES; this part of their nature will remain, substantially, as it was at the commencement of their Christian course; and, in such a connection, it is not to be expected that they will arrive at a state of entire sanctification."*

That the saints will necessarily have "corruptible bodies," while they remain on earth, none doubt; but that they must consequently have *corrupt souls*—souls morally defiled by sin—is not so clear. The mortality of the body, and the moral pollution of the soul, are not things so inseparably connected as this objection would seem to imply. But our author

* Page 87.

seems to think that death has something to do in the great work of sanctification. Thus he proceeds:—

“The union between the body and the soul, and the nature and extent of their influence, the one upon the other, I am well aware, are intricate, and, in many respects, inexplicable subjects. The fact itself, however, that their reciprocal influence is not only real and great, but constant and necessary, all will admit. And, in view of this influence, as recognized in Scripture and felt in the experience of all, I cannot doubt that the dissolution of the body, as followed by its resurrection, is one of the appointed means of sanctification.”*

Now we object utterly to this doctrine of a *death purgatory*. It is wholly unsupported by the word of God—and not only so, but it delays the consummation of the work of sanctification not only *until* death, but beyond that period, even to the “resurrection!” If “the death of the body, as followed by its resurrection, is the appointed means of sanctification,” surely the end cannot precede the means; and of course the sanctification of the spirit will not be completed until the resurrection of the body!! And where will this unsanctified spirit be all this time? No doubt, in some *limbus patrum*, undergoing the process of purification!!! It is lamentable that such doctrine as this should be soberly advanced by a sound Protestant divine, and that it should have so weighty a sanc-

* Pages 87, 88.

tion as the "Presbyterian Board of Publication."*

But though the statement above quoted and remarked upon seems explicit, and utterly incapable of correction or mitigation, in other places the author seems slightly to swerve from his position. The following is an instance :—

"Surely, when the work of sanctification upon the soul is done, God will provide it with a better place of residence than this. It cannot be, that he will leave it any longer in such a situation—to 'groan, being burdened'—to endure the lustings of the flesh—to be annoyed by the motions of sin, which proceed from the members—and to pass through successive stages and scenes of disease and pain. Instead of this, it is far more consistent to believe that, when perfectly delivered from sin, it will be emancipated at once—will put off the tabernacle in which it has lived while sojourning in this vale of tears—and rise to the mount, in which it is to be 'clothed upon' with another and a better 'house, which is from heaven.' "†

Here, instead of making death "the appointed means of sanctification," our author tells us, "that when perfectly delivered from sin, it [the soul] will be emancipated at once—will put off the tabernacle," &c. Now, it would seem, our author would some way, and by some means—he does not tell us by what or how—get the soul "perfectly delivered from sin" before death, and of course it would seem difficult for him to

* See the title-page.

† Page 91.

make death a "means of sanctification," unless it can some way act by anticipation. That is, plainly enough, it must be a "means of sanctification" before it takes place. This is a new theory of cause and effect, or antecedent and sequence!

But I will leave these vagaries. I have no pleasure in exposing their absurdity. They are to me a source of unfeigned grief. I did suppose the old Romish, or rather, more properly, Pagan, doctrine of *purgatory* long since exploded by all right-minded Protestants. I am not surprised to find it recognized in the formulas of faith put forth under the reign of Henry VIII., before the Reformation had extended to the system of Christian doctrine: but to find it, in substance, at least, seriously advanced by a doctor of divinity of the Presbyterian Church, and officially sanctioned by that much-respected denomination of Christians, is almost too much to believe possible. The whole must be set down to the credit of a strong attachment to a theory, and an inconceivable horror of a most destructive error which our good Presbyterian brethren call "perfectionism," and which has begun to make sad inroads upon the orthodoxy and purity of their church.

I say not these things through spite or resentment, but because I suppose the occasion calls for plain dealing, and nothing else will at all reach the case. And after all this, will our opponents find serious fault with us for representing them as pleading for sin, and detracting from

the glory of the Saviour? Does not Dr. Snodgrass clearly make sin a sort of *necessary evil*—and call in death and the separate state to aid in its destruction? If these views are promotive of holiness in the church, and honorable to its great Head, I am not as yet able to see how this is the case. To me it is manifest that this theory is not a part and parcel of the gospel of reconciliation, but rather a human device; and very much like many others, which have been palmed upon the Christian system without legitimate authority, and to its great prejudice.

Several objections yet remain to be considered; but I have occupied so much time upon those already examined, that I must now close this lecture.

LECTURE VI.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE DOCTRINE—CONTINUED.

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” Rom. vii, 6.

I AM still longer to be detained upon objections, which are, no doubt, very honestly presented by our opponents to the theory we maintain. Some of these are far more important than others, and of course must have a larger

share of attention. The present lecture will be wholly occupied in the consideration of one which is thought to be utterly unanswerable. Of course I must take time to investigate it fully. It is supposed to lie against all the various theories of Christian perfection, and consequently is always presented as an insuperable obstacle in the way of the doctrine, however modified. Let us proceed to give it due attention.

10. It is objected, that the doctrine of the practicability of perfection dishonors God's holy law, by lowering its claims to the level of human imbecility.

This objection would be valid against the doctrine of *legal* perfection, but is not applicable to the Wesleyan theory. It has indeed always been urged, as well against the latter as the former view, by those who have arrayed themselves against the doctrine of Christian perfection. It is asserted by an eminent divine,* that the "scheme of perfection," which contemplates "fulfilling the whole divine law, contains more of truth than" either the system of "imputed perfection," or that of "evangelical perfection." So that we gain nothing with such opponents as he is by all our explanations and qualifications. Our theory of "evangelical perfection" more fully and unpardonably dishonors the law, than the old Pelagian dogma of *legal* perfection.

* Rev. Dr. Pond. See Biblical Repository, second series, vol. i, p. 45.

This learned author states the “evangelical” system thus:—

“The second class of perfectionists are those who claim what they call an *evangelical* perfection. They do not profess to obey perfectly the divine law, or think that this is at all necessary. The *moral* law has been superseded by the law of *faith*. It has been annulled, in whole or in part, and the milder and less rigorous requisitions of the gospel have taken its place. It is these milder requisitions that the *evangelical* perfectionist (as he chooses to term himself) professes to fulfill, and not the strict demands of the law.

“To this theory it is sufficient to reply, that the moral law has *not* been superseded or annulled, but is in *full force now throughout the universe*. Our Saviour came to vindicate and honor the law, not to annul it. The dispensation of mercy is based upon it, but does not supersede or abate one iota of its claims. No person can become interested in the grace of the gospel, till he consents to the entire law that it is good, and condemns himself for all his transgressions of it. We may frame for ourselves a standard of character, if we will, and live up to it, and call this *perfection*; but the Bible knows naught of such perfection. It is of no value in the sight of God.”*

The gentleman says, according to the system of “evangelical perfection, the *moral* law has been superseded by the law of *faith* ;” but he

* See Biblical Repository, pp. 44, 45.

does not tell us in what respects this "class of perfectionists" hold this to be the case. Had he gone into the details of the system, he would have found that upon this point there is no real difference between them and the Westminster divines, and indeed all the orthodox Calvinists who have written since the days of the Reformation. The simple sense in which Wesleyans hold that "the moral law has been superseded by the law of faith," is *as the condition of human acceptance*. Wesley's views upon this subject are clearly expressed in his Plain Account of Christian Perfection, as follows:—

"1. How is 'Christ the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth?' Rom. x, 4. In order to understand this, you must understand what law is here spoken of; and this, I apprehend, is, (1.) The Mosaic law—the whole Mosaic dispensation; which St. Paul continually speaks of as one, though containing three parts, the political, moral, and ceremonial. (2.) The Adamic law, that given to Adam in innocence, properly called 'the law of works.' This is in substance the same with the angelic law, being common to angels and men. It required that man should use, to the glory of God, all the powers with which he was created. Now, he was created free from any defect, either in his understanding or his affections. His body was then no clog to the mind; it did not hinder his apprehending all things clearly, judging truly concerning them, and reasoning justly, if he reasoned at all. I say, *if he rea-*

soned; for possibly he did not. Perhaps he had no need of reasoning, till his corruptible body pressed down the mind, and impaired its native faculties. Perhaps, till then, the mind saw every truth that offered as directly as the eye now sees the light.

“Consequently this law, proportioned to his original powers, required that he should always think, always speak, and always act precisely right, in every point whatever. He was well able so to do: and God could not but require the service he was able to pay.

“But Adam fell; and his incorruptible body became corruptible; and ever since it is a clog to the soul, and hinders its operations. Hence, at present, no child of man can at all times apprehend clearly, or judge truly. And where either the judgment or apprehension is wrong, it is impossible to reason justly. Therefore it is as natural for a man to mistake as to breathe; and he can no more live without the one than without the other: consequently no man is able to perform the service which the Adamic law requires.

“And no man is obliged to perform it; God does not require it of any man; for Christ is the end of the Adamic, as well as the Mosaic, law. By his death he hath put an end to both; he hath abolished both the one and the other, with regard to man; and the obligation to observe either the one or the other is vanished away. Nor is any man living bound to observe the Adamic more than the Mosaic law. (I mean

it is not the condition either of present or future salvation.)

“In the room of this, Christ hath established another, namely, the law of faith. Not every one that doeth, but every one that believeth, now receiveth righteousness, in the full sense of the word; that is, he is justified, sanctified, and glorified.

“2. Are we then dead to the law? We are ‘dead to the law, by the body of Christ’ given for us, Rom. vii, 4; to the Adamic as well as Mosaic law. We are wholly freed therefrom by his death, that law expiring with him.

“3. How, then, are we ‘not without law to God, but under the law to Christ?’ 1 Cor. ix, 21. We are without that law; but it does not follow that we are without any law: for God has established another law in its place, even the law of faith; and we are all under this law to God and to Christ; both our Creator and our Redeemer require us to observe it.

“4. Is love the fulfilling of this law? Unquestionably it is. The whole law, under which we now are, is fulfilled by love. Rom. xiii, 9, 10. Faith working or animated by love is all that God now requires of man. He has substituted (not sincerity, but) love, in the room of angelic perfection.

“5. How is ‘love the end of the commandment?’ 1 Tim. i, 5. It is the end of every commandment of God. It is the point aimed at by the whole and every part of the Christian institution. The foundation is faith, purifying

the heart ; the end love, preserving a good conscience.

“ 6. What love is this? The loving the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength ; and the loving our neighbor, every man, as ourselves, as our own souls.

“ 7. What are the fruits or properties of this love? St. Paul informs us at large, love is long-suffering. It suffers all the weaknesses of the children of God ; all the wickedness of the children of the world ; and that not for a little time only, but as long as God pleases. In all, it sees the hand of God, and willingly submits thereto. Meantime it is kind. In all, and after all, it suffers, it is soft, mild, tender, benign. ‘ Love envieth not ;’ it excludes every kind and degree of envy out of the heart : ‘ love acteth not rashly,’ in a violent, headstrong manner, nor passes any rash or severe judgment : it ‘ doth not behave itself indecently ;’ is not rude, does not act out of character : ‘ seeketh not her own’ ease, pleasure, honor, or profit : ‘ is not provoked ;’ expels all anger from the heart : ‘ thinketh no evil ;’ casteth out all jealousy, suspiciousness, and readiness to believe evil : ‘ rejoiceth not in iniquity ;’ yea, weeps at the sin or folly of its bitterest enemies : ‘ but rejoiceth in the truth ;’ in the holiness and happiness of every child of man. ‘ Love covereth all things,’ speaks evil of no man ; ‘ believeth all things’ that tend to the advantage of another’s character. It ‘ hopeth all things,’ whatever may extenuate the faults which cannot be denied ; and

it 'endureth all things' which God can permit, or men and devils inflict. This is 'the law of Christ, the perfect law, the law of liberty.'

"And this distinction between the 'law of faith' (or love) and 'the law of works' is neither a subtil nor an unnecessary distinction. It is plain, easy, and intelligible to any common understanding. And it is absolutely necessary, to prevent a thousand doubts and fears, even in those who do 'walk in love.'

"8. But do we not 'in many things offend all,' yea, the best of us, even against this law? In one sense we do not, while our tempers, and thoughts, and words, and works spring from love. But in another we do, and shall do, more or less, as long as we remain in the body. For neither love nor the 'unction of the Holy One' makes us infallible: therefore, through unavoidable defect of understanding, we cannot but mistake in many things. And these mistakes will frequently occasion something wrong, both in our temper, words, and actions. From mistaking his character, we may love a person less than he really deserves. And by the same mistake we are unavoidably led to speak or act, with regard to that person, in such a manner as is contrary to this law, in some or other of the preceding instances.

"9. Do we not then need Christ, even on this account? The holiest of men still need Christ as their prophet, as 'the light of the world.' For he does not give them light, but from moment to moment; the instant he with-

draws, all is darkness. They still need Christ as their king; for God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain. They still need Christ as their priest, to make atonement for their holy things. Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ." Pp. 106–113.

Dr. Pond, in an effort to prove that the man who thinks himself already perfect will, almost of necessity, be led to lower the standard of duty, refers to this passage from Mr. Wesley as proof, in the following (very charitable) language:—

"Mr. Wesley did not intend, perhaps, to depress the standard of duty; but he held to the repeal of 'the Adamic law,' and thought it very consistent with perfection that persons should fall into great *errors* and *faults*."*

I regret exceedingly that the learned doctor should, either through prejudice or carelessness, have misrepresented Mr. Wesley in this case. The very important qualification which Mr. Wesley has inserted in a parenthesis could scarcely have escaped the doctor's notice; and yet that qualification precludes the possibility of any such construction as he puts upon Mr. W.'s language, on any fair or honorable principles. The qualification is this: "I mean it [that is, the Adamic law] is not the condition either of present or future salvation." Now, does the doctor consider it the same thing to

* Biblical Repository, vol. i, p. 56.

say that "the Adamic law *is not the condition* either of present or future salvation," as to say that that law is *repealed*? If so, it will be but logically fair to conclude that, as he does not hold to "the repeal of the Adamic law," he must consider it as "the condition of present or future salvation." This is elevating "the standard of duty" with a vengeance! It is holding to salvation upon the conditions of the covenant of works, contrary to all his own standards. But not insisting further upon this conclusion, I will now attempt to make good the position with which I commenced, namely, that there is little or no difference between the Wesleyan theory and its opposite, in relation to the sense in which the Adamic law is superseded by the law of faith.

Luther, with all his strong views of the necessary continuance of indwelling sin through life, is as decisive upon the *destruction* of the law, as a condition of acceptance, as is Wesley himself. The great German reformer says, "*But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster* :—That is to say, we are free from the law, from the prison, and from our schoolmaster; for when faith is revealed, the law terrifieth and tormenteth us no more. Paul here speaketh of faith as it was preached and published to the world by Christ in the time before appointed. For Christ, taking upon him our flesh, came once into the world: he abolished the law with all its effects, and delivered from eternal death all those who received his

benefit by faith. If, therefore, ye look unto Christ, and that which he hath done, there is now no law. For he, coming in the time appointed, took away the law. Now, since the law is gone, we are not yet under the tyranny thereof any more ; but we live in joy and safety under Christ, who now sweetly reigneth in us by his Spirit.”*

Melancthon is equally decisive. “It is difficult,” says he, “to understand how we are free from the *law*. For it is inscribed on the minds of men ; so that to abolish the *law* would be the same as to destroy the mind and the creature of God. Therefore the *law* is not abrogated in such a sense that it should not be kept, but *something else is proposed for justification*, viz., the promise of reconciliation for the sake of Christ. Therefore, the *law* is not removed, but the requirement of justification through the *law*, and the right of condemning men, (for no one has fulfilled it except Christ.) And that right of the law is taken away in respect to those only who by faith apprehend the justification promised through Christ. The law, therefore, is *abrogated* in respect to those who by faith have overcome the law, accusing, terrifying, and condemning them. This the apostle means when he says, ‘Ye are not under the law ;’ that is, though you do not satisfy the law, yet consider that you are reputed righteous on account of Christ, not on account of your own fulfillment of the law, your own love, or works.

* Commentary on Galatians, chap. iii, 25.

And as faith brings the Holy Spirit, and a new life, it brings also wisdom, and a new righteousness, viz., love to God, and other emotions assenting to the law of God. For faith through Christ draws near to God.”*

I next present an abstract of the views of *Calvin* upon this point. In his chapter entitled “The harmony between the promises of the law and those of the gospel,” after some preliminaries he proceeds:—“The consequence then is, that all mankind are proved by the law to be obnoxious to the curse and wrath of God ; in order to be saved from which, they need deliverance from the power of the law, and emancipation from its servitude : not a carnal liberty, which would seduce us from obedience to the law, invite to all kinds of licentiousness, break down the barriers of inordinate desire, and give the reins to every lawless passion ; but a spiritual liberty, which will console and elevate a distressed and dejected conscience, showing it to be delivered from the curse and condemnation under which it was held by the law. This liberation from subjection to the law, and manumission, (if I may use the term,) we attain, when we apprehend by faith the mercy of God in Christ, by which we are assured of the remission of sins, by the sense of which the law penetrated us with legal compunction and remorse.”†

* *Disputatio de discrimine Veteris et Novi Testamenti, deque Legis abrogatione.*

† *Institutes*, pp. 356, 357, 4to. New-York, 1819.

The learned Witsius, as in his theological opinions generally, so upon this point, harmonizes with Calvin. His views are expressed as follows:—"Having sufficiently considered the violation of the covenant by sin, let us now inquire whether, and how far, it is made void or abrogated *by God himself*. And first, we are very certain that there are many things of immutable and eternal truth in this covenant; which we reckon up in this order. 1st. The precepts of the covenant, excepting that probatory one, oblige all and every one to a perfect performance of duty, in what state soever they are. 2dly. Eternal life, promised by the covenant, can be obtained upon no other condition than that of perfect, and in every respect complete, obedience. 3dly. No act of disobedience escapes the vengeance of God, and death is always the punishment of sin. But these maxims do not exclude a surety, who may come under engagements in man's stead, to undergo the penalty and perform the condition. But we shall speak of this afterward, and now proceed to what has been proposed."

"The law therefore remains as the rule of our duty, but abrogated as to its federal nature; nor can it be the condition, by the performance of which man may acquire a right to the reward. In this sense the apostle says, 'We are not under the law,' Rom. vi, 14; namely, as prescribing the condition of life. 'There is, indeed, still an indissoluble connection between perfect righteousness and eternal life, so that *the last*

cannot be obtained without *the first*. But after that man, by falling from righteousness, had lost all his hope of the reward, God was at liberty either to punish the sinner, according to his demerit, or give him a surety to fulfill all righteousness in his stead.”*

Next, I present the confession of faith of the Westminster divines, adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

“Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned ; (Rom. vi, 14 ; Gal. ii, 16 ; iii, 13 ; iv, 4, 5 ; Acts xiii, 39 ; Rom. viii, 1 ;) yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others ; in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly ; (Rom. vii, 12, 22, 25 ; Psa. cxix, 4, 5, 6 ; 1 Cor. vii, 19 ; Gal. v, 14, 16, 18–23 ;) discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives ; (Rom. vii, 7 ; iii, 20 ;) so as examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin ; (James i, 23–25 ; Rom. vii, 9, 14, 24 ;) together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. (Gal. iii, 24 ; Rom. vii, 24, 25 ; viii, 3, 4.) It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin ; (James ii, 11 ; Psa. cxix, 101, 104, 128 ;) and the threatenings of it serve to show what

* Economy of the Covenants, book i, chap ix, sec. 1, 2, and 21, vol. i, pp. 124, 132.

even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof threatened in the law. (Ezra ix, 13, 14; Psa. lxxxix, 30-34.) The promises of it, in like manner, show them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, (Lev. xxvi, 1-14; 2 Cor. vi, 16; Eph. vi, 2, 3; Psa. xxxvii, 11; Matt. v, 5; Psa. xix, 11;) although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of works: (Gal. ii, 16; Luke xvii, 10:) so as a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace. (Rom. vi, 12, 14; 1 Pet. iii, 8-12; Psa. xxxiv, 12-16; Heb. xii, 28, 29.)

"Neither are the fore-mentioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it; (Gal. iii, 21;) the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done." (Ezek. xxxvi, 27; Heb. viii, 10; Jer. xxxi, 33.)

Now where is the great ground of quarrel between Mr. Wesley and his opponents, touching the law? On both sides, all agree that we are not, in the gospel, put upon the terms of perfect conformity to the Adamic law, as the condition of salvation: that "true believers are not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned," but that

as St. Paul says, "A man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." All admit that the law of perfect purity still remains, as an expression of the inflexible holiness of God, and as the great rule of duty binding all moral beings to a state of allegiance to their rightful Sovereign: that its use is to expose the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and "the terrible vengeance which awaits the sinner;" but that it makes no provision for either pardon or sanctification. While the law brandishes over the sinner's head the sword of justice, the gospel offers him salvation upon terms which do not infract its high and holy claims. St. Paul says, "Christ is the end (*τελος*, *perfection*, *completeness**) of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," Rom. x, 4; that is, the great purposes of the law are fully carried out and sustained by extending righteousness—the grace of justification and sanctification—to the believer.

Again St. Paul says, "The law is our school-master to bring us to Christ, that we might be

* "*For Christ is the end of the law—Completion, or, as translated by Erasmus, perfection of the law is tolerably well suited to this passage; yet, since the common reading is almost universally received, and does not ill agree with the context, I leave it to my readers to make their own choice. Every precept, every promise, every doctrine of the law looks to Christ as the mark which ought to be kept constantly in view. All the judicial, ceremonial, ritual, and moral parts of the law are directed to the Messiah as their completion.*"—*Calvin*. See his Commentary on the place.

justified by faith: but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster."* Gal. iii, 24, 25.

Mr. Wesley, then, is sustained, in his strongest expressions, by Luther, Calvin, the Westminster divines, and, I might add, by all the orthodox reformers, both Calvinists and Arminians; and, what is infinitely better, by the great apostle of the Gentiles, upon the subject of the abolishment of the law, *as a condition of life*.

When we plead for a state of holiness which fully meets the *conditions of the gospel*, why must our opponents for ever meet us with the objection that the law is infinitely above the highest measure of our obedience? And when we reply, "We are not under the law, but under grace," just as St. Paul and all their own divines teach, why are we then to be charged with lowering the standard of holiness required by God's holy law? Is this legitimate reason-

* "*Schoolmaster*—That is to say, a means and instrument to govern our souls and actions, fitting for the church's childhood, with much rigor and servitude. *That we might*—Namely, that looking still upon Christ, the church might, even in those days, receive from him the gift of righteousness and life, and that at this present time the effect of free justification might show itself at full, by freeing us from the former labors and rigors of the law. *No longer under*—He means not here that the doctrine is abolished, but only the properties and qualities of it, whereby it appointeth reward and punishment with the uttermost rigor; forgiveth nothing, but requireth entire obedience, &c."—*Diodati—Pious Annotations upon the Holy Bible*. Quarto, London, 1648.

ing? I think not. I am persuaded the objection is founded in a mistaken issue, and that the reasoning which follows is consequently all fallacious.

But, after all, it may be urged that there is no real difference between the original law and the law of love—that the requirement that we should love God with all our heart, soul, and strength, is equal to the original law of perfect purity.

The difference between the original law of perfect purity and the law of love, as incorporated in the gospel, is this: One is an expression of the divine will concerning beings perfectly pure, in the full possession of all their original capabilities: but the other is an expression of the divine will concerning fallen beings restored to a state of probation by the mediation of Christ. Each alike requires the exercise of *all the capabilities* of the subjects; but the subjects being in different circumstances, and differing in the amount of their capabilities, the conditions of life are, from the necessity of the case, varied. Allowing the same formula to be employed in both cases, viz., “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength,” the heart, &c., in one case, being in a different condition from what it is in the other, does not *in all respects* imply the same thing. In both cases, it implies *the whole heart*:—but *the whole heart* is *less in some respects* in one case than in the other.

This, it may still be urged, amounts to the same thing, viz., a dishonoring of the law. For in this case the standard of character presented is lower than the law originally required, and just so far the law is not fulfilled—is not magnified and made honorable.

It is admitted that the claims of the law cannot be said to have been met, *in his own person*, by the holiest man that has ever lived since the fall. And had this been required as the condition of salvation, who could have been saved? But then, if the claims of the law are not met in us—if we are not by some means raised up to the standard of holiness which the law requires—is the law not dishonored in every instance in which a sinner is saved from its curse? Such would doubtless be the fact, were it not for the atonement of Christ. But Christ by his atonement has, so to speak, made amends to the law for the injury it receives by the pardon of offenders. “Christ is the end [or perfection] of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Rom. x, 4.

We see the law, for the purpose of maintaining the moral order of God’s kingdom, inflicting death upon transgression. Now, unless God’s abhorrence of sin and the holiness of his government can be manifested to intelligent and moral beings as clearly and as fully by some other means, every individual sinner must infallibly die—there can be no hope of salvation but upon the *destruction* of the law. The death of Christ is represented in the Scriptures as

meeting the case. It supervenes to rescue the law from disgrace—so to carry out its original objects, viz., a demonstration of God's righteousness, and an exhibition of the evil of sin, that its highest honor is secured in the pardon and salvation of the believer. As saith the apostle, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii, 25, 26.

Some have, as I conceive erroneously, attempted to prove that Christians may perfectly fulfill "the righteousness of the law," from St. Paul's words, Rom. viii, 3, 4, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." But I conceive the apostle's object is to show the effect of "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" upon "the righteousness of the law," in the case of those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." He shows in whom and how the righteousness of the law is fulfilled. This is done in those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." It is done by "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemning sin in the flesh."

The fulfillment of the righteousness of the law is thus attributed to Christ—to his sacrificial death upon the cross, by which he “condemned sin in the flesh,” or, in other words, made a suitable and necessary expression of God’s abhorrence of sin. But to return to the main point.

The standard of character set up in the gospel must be such as is practicable by man, fallen as he is. Coming up to this standard is what we call Christian perfection. But the opposers of this doctrine vehemently object to the idea of admitting anything short of perfect and un-sinful obedience, according to the claims of the original law. No allowance must be made for our infirmities. *Circumstances* must not be taken into the account in fixing the standard of duty. And the opposite view is represented as running into the grossest absurdities. It is thought that the idea of the divine requirements being graded according to the *circumstances* of the agent necessarily implies “that the more we sin and thereby debilitate our powers, the more circumscribed does the sphere of our duty become—or, in other words, that we are excusable for not meeting the requisition of the law of God just in proportion as we advance in the career of rebellion against him. And if there is either truth or safety in this position, then the shortest road to entire sanctification is the highway of sin. We have only to persevere in sin till our powers become so ‘weak’ that we have no further capability of

obeying any part of the divine law, and then we are sanctified to the full extent of our obligations; because our 'circumstances' are such that we are under no obligation whatever."*

This objection has no force against our theory. Let us test it:—1. It must be conceded that sin is attended with a loss of moral power. And, 2. Until the sinner shall have exhausted the last moment of his probation, his salvation is possible. Consequently, 3. He is only required on his part to perform, as the condition of acceptance, at any given point in his downward course, what at that point he is able to do by the help which is offered him. For if, at any point of time, his powers fall short of the requirement, and so his salvation is no longer practicable, then his probation ceases, and the promises of the gospel are no longer applicable to him. But, 4. His responsibility in general does not diminish, but rather increases, with his loss of power. Until he repents, his guilt constantly accumulates, and one of its great aggravations is, that he is squandering away the precious talent committed to him—that he is with every sin weakening the power of conscience and grieving the Spirit of God, and so disqualifying himself for the great ends of his being, and constantly approaching a reprobacy of mind which is a certain precursor of eternal death. 5. At any point in the sinner's life before his probation expires, on the conditions of

* Dr. Snodgrass on Entire Sanctification, pp. 23, 24.

repentance and faith, God will graciously pardon *all his sins*—not excepting their aggravations—his squandering away his moral power, or, in other words, his voluntary and unnecessary abuse, and consequent loss, of the grace bestowed upon him for his salvation. All—all this is forgiven freely. Well, when all these sins are graciously pardoned, can it be supposed that he is now held accountable for the improvement of powers and privileges which, in his former course of evil living, he had wholly squandered away, and cannot now recover? An old inebriate comes to repentance. Does God require of him now, with his broken constitution and enfeebled mental energies, just as much as would have been required if he had begun to serve him in the days of his youth, and had constantly accumulated moral power to hoary age? I mean, is he required, after having received pardon at the hand of God for all past sins, as a condition of continued gracious acceptance, to employ in the service of God undiminished and uninjured powers of body and mind? If so, he is put upon terms altogether impracticable. Indeed, upon this principle no one can ever be saved; for no one can do as much as he could have done if he had never sinned.

Should it here be objected, that upon the principle that God will accept of what our enfeebled powers enable us to bestow, at any time, we have great encouragement to continue in sin, for the more we sin the less is required of

us ; we should answer, 1. A man's salvation is not probable in proportion to the smallness of his powers. The man who had five talents improved them, while the man who had but one hid it in the earth. 2. Sin constantly accumulates guilt, and increases the difficulty of repentance, and, of course, the doubtfulness of that repentance. 3. If the sinner comes to repentance, one of the bitterest ingredients in his cup of sorrow will be, that he has lost so much power to do good and glorify God, and that at best he must stumble along at a poor rate, with broken bones and diminished comforts. And, 4. If he finally gets to heaven, he will then see that he has failed to secure an inconceivable amount of blessedness, by neglecting to make the best of his means. What encouragement is there here, then, to continue in sin ? I confess I see none.

To make Dr. Snodgrass's conclusion, that "the shortest road to entire sanctification is the highway of sin," valid, he must assume that the sinner, when he shall have persevered in sin until his powers become so weak that he has no further capability of obeying any part of the divine law, is then, of course, to be pardoned for all his numerous and aggravated offenses, and sanctified from his accumulated and crimson stains, *without repentance and faith*. And this he must find contained in our system, or he has no right to assume it. But the principle we deny and utterly detest ; nor can it, by any process of legitimate reasoning, be shown to

grow out of our theory, or to hold to it the least relationship.

I have been the more diffuse upon this point, because it is much relied upon by the opposition; and because it has seldom been fully and perspicuously treated. I know not whether I have added any light to what others have shed upon it. I have, however, attempted to make the whole subject as clear as the nature of the case will admit, and have reached results which are, at least, satisfactory to my own mind. That they will be equally so to others is more than I can expect. With such I will unite in humble and earnest prayer to God, "What I know not, teach thou me," until the obscurity of our spiritual vision shall be wholly removed.

LECTURE VII.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE DOCTRINE—CONTINUED.

"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Rom. vi, 2.

IN the two preceding lectures I considered various objections which are urged against the doctrine of the attainableness of entire sanctification in this life. The more weighty objections, however, yet remain to be examined. They are those which are founded upon certain portions of Scripture which are supposed to be

directly opposed to this doctrine. It shall be the object of this lecture carefully and candidly to inquire into the true sense of such passages, and to see whether, when properly understood, they in any measure militate against our views.

I have for the Bible a most sincere and unreserved veneration, and to its decisions I would bow with unqualified submission. I believe it to be God's own word—all inspired—and consequently, to speak the truth without mixture of error, and to be entirely consistent with itself. If, then, our opponents are able to bring "the direct testimony of the Bible" against our views upon the subject in question, and if, upon due investigation, it shall appear that they have treated their witness fairly:—if there is no reason to question their construction of the language they adduce, why, then, we are in error, and must recede from our ground. Now let us see what is produced under this head.

We are told that "not a single text can be adduced, which, properly understood, attributes perfection to good men in this life. On the contrary, the criminal imperfection of them all is most plainly asserted."* If this proposition can be maintained, we are certainly wide of the mark of evangelical truth.

The first scripture adduced by the reviewer to prove the latter part of the above assertion is Eccles. vii, 20, "For there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not." Another passage, similar in language, which is

* Princeton Review, July, 1842, p. 451.

presented, is 1 Kings viii, 46, "For there is no man that sinneth not." These passages are found in the article referred to, as usual, without illustration, criticism, or argument. They are supposed to be entirely conclusive. Hence it is simply remarked in relation to the first, that "it is as evident from this passage that no one on earth is perfectly holy as that any are imperfect."* This conclusion I do not admit, and for the reasons which follow.

In my construction of these passages I appeal to the original; not because I undervalue the present authorized version of the Bible. I believe it in general to be worthy of all confidence, and, on the whole, a better exhibition of the sense of the originals than any translation which has been subsequently made, or than any we are likely very soon to have. But, in discussing the language of Scripture, in all cases of a difference of opinion the ultimate appeal must be to the originals. And our opponents, it may be presumed, will not object to this method of discussion, even should it be found that the *sound* of the words, as in the present version, is rather more favorable to their views than the *sense* of the original text. I can scarcely be left to fear that critics so learned for such a reason will refuse to be governed by well-established laws of exegesis.

1 Kings viii, 46, כִּי אֵין אָדָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִחַטֵּא
I render, *For there is no man who may not sin.*

* Princeton Review, July, 1842, p. 451.

And Eccles. vii, 20, כִּי אָדָם אֶרֶץ צַדִּיק בְּאֶרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה-טוֹב וְלֹא יִחַטָּא *There is not a righteous man upon earth who does good and may not sin.* The verb חָטָא *to sin* in these passages is in the future, and I render it subjunctively, with the negative particle, *may not sin*, that is, there is no man *who is not liable to sin.* The rule of Hebrew syntax authorizing this rendering may be found in all good Hebrew Grammars. I give it from Dr. Nordheimer, as follows: "The future form of the verb is frequently used to predicate the future occurrence of an event as dependent either *subjectively* on the will of the agent or speaker, or *objectively* on external circumstances.

"This form is used subjunctively, to denote contingency, that is, to predicate not the positive, but the possible, or probable future occurrence of an event, signified in English by the auxiliaries *may, might, &c.*, e. g., כֹּל אֲשֶׁר תִּאְדָּרָה נַפְשְׁךָ, *whatever thy soul may desire*, Deut. xiv, 26 ; יְיָ יִרְרָנֵנוּ מִדְּרָכָיו *that he may instruct us concerning his ways*, Isa. ii, 3 ; לֹא יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָכֶם אֶת-פָּרִי הָאֲדָמָה *that he may not destroy for you the produce of the ground*, Mal. iii, 11 ; יִדְעוּ גוֹיִם *that the nations may know they (are) men*, Psa. ix, 21 ; cxix, 115 ; יִעֲבֹר עָלַי מָה *whatever may happen to me*, Job xiii, 13 ; xiv, 6."*

* See Critical Grammar of the Hebrew Language, vol. ii, *Dependent Use of the Future*, § 993. See also Stuart's Hebrew Grammar, § 564, (*h*.) (*i*.)

In the application of the rule just recited to the passages under consideration, we are supported by some of the best critics, Romish, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Arminian. The Vulgate, or Jerome's version, has *non peccet, may not sin*. In the interlineal translations in the Antwerp, London, and Paris Polyglots; in Castalio's, Osiander's, and Francis Junius's versions, we have the same. And we have precisely the same rendering of the Syriac and Arabic in the London and Paris Polyglots. This result I have arrived at from personal inspection of the authorities I quote, and I need not say to a scholar, that they present a tide of evidence in favor of the version I have given, that it is not easy for the sturdiest spirits to resist. We see here what the best scholars of any age since the commencement of the Christian era have determined in relation to the proper rendering of the original Hebrew text, without any reference at all to the question at issue between us and our opponents on the subject of the necessary continuance of sin in believers.

In addition to all this, there is a reason in the context of one of the passages in question, which makes our rendering necessary to preserve a consistent sense. 1 Kings viii, 46. The words in question are preceded by "*if they sin*," which would be perfectly consistent with the parenthetic sentence which follows, as we translate it: "for there is no man who *may* not sin," but would be scarcely at all consistent with the expression of the sense our opponents give

the passage. 'They would have Solomon say, *If they sin, for they certainly will sin, as there is no man who does not sin ALL HIS LIFE.* What sense would there be in the hypothetical sentence "*if they sin,*" if indeed there had been no IF in the case?

I have devoted so much attention to these passages because they are confidently relied upon, and on all occasions brought forward by our opponents, both learned and unlearned, as altogether conclusive—as decisively proving, that *the best men continue to sin on through every step of their way to heaven!* See also Dr. Adam Clarke's notes upon these passages.

Another passage which, it is supposed, is directly against us, is, James iii, 2, "In many things we offend all." Mr. Wesley's reply to the argument deduced from this text is short, but conclusive. It is as follows:—

"True; but who are the persons here spoken of? Why, those many masters or teachers whom God had not sent: not the apostle himself, nor any real Christian. That in the word *we*, used by a figure of speech, common in all other as well as the inspired writings, the apostle could not possibly include himself, or any other true believer, appears, First, from the ninth verse, 'Therewith bless we God, and therewith curse we men.' Surely not we apostles! not we believers! Secondly, from the words preceding the text: 'My brethren, be not many masters,' or teachers, 'knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

For in many things we offend all.' *We!* Who? Not the apostles, nor true believers, but they who were to 'receive the greater condemnation,' because of those many offenses. Nay, Thirdly, the verse itself proves that 'we offend all,' cannot be spoken either of all men or all Christians. For in it immediately follows the mention of a man who 'offends not,' as the *we* first mentioned did; from whom therefore he is professedly contradistinguished, and pronounced a 'perfect man.' " *

And another is 1 John i, 8, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." The same clear and conclusive reasoner meets the argument from this passage with equal promptness, thus:—

"I answer, (1.) The tenth verse fixes the sense of the eighth: 'If we say we have no sin,' in the former, being explained by, 'If we say we have not sinned,' in the latter verse. (2.) The point under consideration is not, whether we have or have not sinned heretofore; and neither of these verses asserts that we do sin, or commit sin now. (3.) The ninth verse explains both the eighth and tenth: 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' As if he had said, 'I have before affirmed the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.' And no man can say, 'I need it not; I have no sin to be cleansed from.' 'If we say we have no sin,' that 'we have not sinned,

* Plain Account, pp. 24, 25.

we deceive ourselves,' and make God a liar: but 'if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just,' not only 'to forgive us our sins,' but also 'to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,' that we may 'go and sin no more.'**

The last argument from the Scriptures in favor of the necessary continuance of sin in believers which I shall notice, is that founded upon the *seventh* chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Here, it is alledged, the apostle speaks of his own present experience, and acknowledges the existence of corruptions—of the carnal mind—in himself. And it is urged that if the great apostle of the Gentiles was obliged to confess himself "*carnal, sold under sin,*" it can hardly be expected that any this side of heaven may be entirely freed from sin.

There are two views taken of the chapter in question. One is, that the apostle is speaking of his own state at the time of writing, and, of course, what he there says of himself, may be said of the best Christians. The other is, that he is speaking of his former experience, when groaning under the bondage of the law, or that he personates one in that condition.

I shall first consider the reasons which are assigned for the former view, and then attempt to prove the truth of the latter.

As I find the arguments in favor of that exposition I oppose stated in the strongest light in

* Plain Account, pp. 25, 26.

the commentaries of Dr. Hodge and the Rev. Albert Barnes, I shall state them in the language of these authors.

Dr. Hodge says,—“That Paul throughout the latter part of this chapter is describing his own feelings when writing, appears evident from the following considerations :

“*a.* Because he uses the first person and the present tense throughout the passage, and says, ‘I consent to the law that it is good ;’ ‘I delight in the law of God ;’ ‘I see another law in my members ;’ ‘O wretched man that I am ;’ ‘So then I myself serve the law of God,’ &c., &c. He does this with an earnestness and warmth which show that he is expressing the feelings of his own heart. No example is to be found in all the apostle’s writings analogous to this, if it be assumed that he is here personating another.”*

This reasoning is not conclusive ; for if it be true that “no example is to be found in all the apostle’s writings analogous to this—if it be assumed that he is here personating another”—still there may be reasons for considering this a solitary instance of the kind in the writings of St. Paul. It is not always possible, or ever necessary to find “examples” in all respects “analogous” in order to understand a passage from any writer. But “examples” sufficiently analogous for our purposes can be found “in the apostle’s writings” which will be presented

* Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Philadelphia. 1836. P. 176

before the argument is closed. The commentator proceeds :—

“ *b.* Because there is nothing in this passage inconsistent with the experience of the holiest of men. This has been shown in the commentary. The inward conflict here described every Christian understands and experiences.”

Now in the “commentary” on the fourteenth verse the author says, “*Carnal*, when spoken of men, means to be under the government of the flesh,” and on the phrase, *sold under sin*, he says, “That is, a slave to sin.” But still another meaning he gives the words, in order to make them apply to the Christian character, but which suits it little better. He says :—“The phrase in question, however, may also mean that one is subject to a power which, of himself, he cannot resist ; against which he may and does struggle, and from which he desires to be free ; but which, notwithstanding all his efforts, still asserts its authority. This is a state of bondage. It is in this sense that Paul says he was sold under sin. This appears clearly from the following verses, which are explanatory of this clause.” Now is the true Christian in “a state of bondage?” The apostle declares that “the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus” had made him “free from the law of sin and death,” chap. viii, 2. Is there no difference between being *free* and being in *bondage*? When the author will prove this, which he has not yet done to my satisfaction in his commentary, then will he have gained his point, or

rather I may say, he will have confounded things radically and essentially different, and have made the apostle totally unintelligible. Whether the language of this chapter does indeed accord "with the experience of the holiest of men," I shall more particularly inquire hereafter, simply remarking for the present, that this is wholly assumed by the author without proof. Again,—

"c. The passage contains many declarations inconsistent with the Scriptural account of unrenewed men. The Bible does not speak of unrenewed men as consenting to the law, as hating sin and struggling against it, groaning under it as a tyrant's yoke, as delighting in the law of God, and doing all this as to the inward or new man."

This argument depends upon the author's construction of verse 22, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." This he thinks "expressive of real complacency and delight in the divine excellence as exhibited in the law," and of course proof positive and conclusive that the apostle speaks of a person in a gracious state. But this argument is completely refuted by Professor Stuart, in his note upon this passage:—

"(22) *Συνήδομαι γὰρ . . . ἄνθρωπον*, *For I delight in the law of God, as it respects the internal man. Γάρ illustrantis.* The sentiment is, for substance, the same as in verses 15–17; but the costume in which it appears is diverse. That the sentiment, moreover, is epexegetical

of ver. 21 is quite plain. Hence the γάρ with which it is introduced.

“In regard to the *words*; συνήδουαι here corresponds to σύμφημι in ver. 16; and ἔσω ἄνθρωπον here, corresponds to ἐγώ in ver. 17. If any one is disposed to urge here the strength of the expression συνήδουαι τῷ νόμῳ, as being inconsistent with an unregenerate state, he will do well to look back on ver. 14, and ask, whether the expression there, on the other side, is not still stronger. The truth is, in a contrast like this, where the mind of the writer is wrought up to a high pitch of feeling, the mere *forms* of expression cannot in themselves go very far toward establishing any principle of doctrine. It is *to the object at which the writer is aiming* that we must look; and this object has been already brought to view. But if any one insists on urging the *form* of expression, I must ask him first to construe ver. 14 by the rule which he himself here adopts; and then to compare Mark vi, 20; John v, 35; Matt. xiii, 20; John ii, 23–25; Acts viii, 13, comp. ver. 20–23; Isa. lviii, 2, where it is said of the wicked, that ‘they delight to know my ways,’ and ‘they take delight in approaching to God.’ Compare also 1 Kings xxi, 27–29; 1 John iii, 9; Psal. cxix, 3. Many other passages of the like tenor could be adduced, in order to show that a *qualified* sense is to be put on such expressions. Above all, John xv, 22–24; Matt. vi, 24; Luke xvi, 13, and xiv, 26, show that very strong expressions of this kind are to be

modified according to the nature of the case which is under consideration.

“ With such examples before us, and with the whole context (at least so it plainly appears to me) to remind us of the necessity of taking *συνήδομαι* in a *qualified* sense, I cannot hesitate to say, that ver. 22 only expresses in a more intense form, and with more feeling, what is simply expressed in ver. 16, *σύνμφημι τῷ νόμῳ*. The approbation, complacency, (so to speak,) which reason and conscience yield to the divine law as holy and good, is the truth intended to be expressed. It is strongly expressed, indeed ; but not more so than in the cases to which the reader is referred above, and about the exegesis of which there can be no disagreement. In fact, the very next verse shows that the apostle cannot here be understood to mean the pleasure which a regenerate and filial spirit takes in the divine law ; for this, as chap. viii, 1–17 most clearly shows, would lead the person who might possess it, to ‘ walk after the Spirit,’ and not ‘ after the flesh ;’ while here, the very individual who ‘ delights in the law of God after the inner man,’ is at the same time represented as being ruled over by the law of sin and death, and led to destruction by it. Is this the real state of a child of God? Comp. viii, 9–14.”*

Let us now attend to another of Dr. Hodge’s reasons :—

“ *d.* Because the conflict which is here de-

* Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.

scribed is, in other passages, portrayed (for example, in Gal. v, 17) in language which, by common consent, can be applied only to true Christians. That these passages refer to the same subject is plain, not only from the fact that the flesh (or corrupt nature) is mentioned in both as the evil principle, but because the description in both cases is nearly in the same words. There the flesh is said to war against the Spirit, so that we cannot do the things that we would; here the flesh or the law in the members is said to war against the law in the mind, so as to bring us into captivity to the law of sin. If, therefore, the one passage is descriptive of the experience of the true Christian, so must also the other be."

The passage in Galatians upon which the doctor relies is as follows:—"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. v, 17. There is, however, an essential difference between this passage and the one he would illustrate. In the passage in Galatians there is a *conflict* between the *flesh* and the *Spirit*. But in the passage especially in question, (Rom. vii, 14,) the flesh is *dominant*. The subject of the seventh of Romans is represented as struggling indeed, but never victorious—as making resistance, but still a captive—a *slave* to sin. In the passage which he would make parallel, the flesh opposes and curtails the operations of the Spirit, so that they could

not do the things they would. They were *weakened* by the flesh, but it is not said they were *conquered*. Here the author totally fails: and failing here, his argument is wholly inconclusive.* But let us attend to his concluding reason:—

“*e.* The context requires this interpretation. The apostle has been insisting on the necessity of our being free from the law in order to our justification and sanctification. To show that this doctrine does not involve any reflection on the law, it was necessary to show why the law is thus inefficient. In order to accomplish this object, he explains how the law operates on the depraved heart. It arouses conscience, and it provokes opposition. This is one part of its effect, but not the whole. Even when the heart is renewed, the law cannot by itself promote holiness. It presents, indeed, the form of beauty, and the soul delights in it after the inward man, but it cannot destroy the power of indwelling sin. The Christian, therefore, must look for deliverance, not to the law, but to the grace of God in Jesus Christ. It was essential, therefore, to the apostle’s object to show that, even for the true Christian, the bondage of the law is unnecessary.”

As to the object of the apostle the commentator is doubtless correct, but is in error in his conclusion. I do not mean the conclusion ex-

* For a more complete view of the difference between these two passages, see Dr. Hammond on *Romans* vii, 23.

pressed in the quotation, that "the Christian must look for deliverance, not to the law, but to the grace of God in Christ Jesus"—this conclusion is good and valid—but his general conclusion, that therefore the apostle is speaking of one in a regenerate state. Let us see how this conclusion follows from his premises.

"The apostle," he truly says, "has been insisting on the necessity of our living free from the law, in order to our justification and sanctification." To show this, without at the same time impugning the law, he shows the cause of the inefficiency of the law. "It arouses conscience," &c. But "even when the heart is aroused, it cannot promote holiness." The doctrine of this latter proposition is true enough, but it is wholly an assumption without proof that this is the true position taken by the apostle. Had he said, even when the *heart* is *awakened*, or the *conscience aroused*, the law cannot deliver from the power of sin—*cannot sanctify*—he would have said all that either the language or the scope of the apostle's argument authorizes. A little examination will convince any one, that the commentator, in order to make his argument apply, assumes the main point in dispute, and that the point he assumes is not only unnecessary to give a consistent sense to the chapter under discussion, but involves the apostle in absurdities and contradictions, as we shall presently see. The grand object of the apostle in this chapter is to show that *the law cannot renew the heart*. Now whence the ne-

cessity, even if it were a conceded fact, to assert the triumphs of sin in the best of Christians through life? This would be proving too much: for it would prove that the *gospel*, as well as the *law*, is ineffectual to the purposes of subduing the evils of the human heart. How would this result tell upon the apostle's ulterior design, which undoubtedly was to bring in the gospel in place of the law? Would he be likely to effect this object—that is, would he persuade the Jew to believe that the gospel is the more efficient system, by a labored argument to prove that it is just as effectually baffled as is the law itself by the reigning power of human corruptions? This would be a singular course of argument indeed.

The Rev. Mr. Barnes gives us six reasons for understanding the seventh of Romans, “as descriptive of the operations of the mind of Paul subsequent to his conversion.” These are mostly the same as those of Professor Hodge, and have been already answered. The *first* and the *last*, however, may require special attention. The first is, “Because it seems to me to be the most obvious. It is that which will strike plain men as being the natural meaning; men who have not a theory to support, and who understand language in its usual sense.”

I cannot admit that any one capable of grasping the scope of the apostle's argument, as contained in the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters, would consider Mr. Barnes' construction of the seventh “the most obvious.” It might

strike some "plain men as being the most natural;" but they will, I think, generally be those who, if they "have not a theory to support," yet approach the investigation under strong biases. The language of the Bible can scarcely mean anything else in the views of most men than what they have always been accustomed to hear attributed to it by their teachers. It is hard work for Mr. Barnes himself to depart from the exegesis sanctioned by the Puritan fathers upon certain proof texts, though he ventures to go wide of their doctrinal views upon several points, and sometimes at the hazard of the charge of inconsistency. His last reason for his exposition is as follows:—"Because it accords with the experience of Christians, and not with sinners. It is just such language as plain Christians, who are acquainted with their own hearts, use to express their feelings."

Here I am at issue with our commentator. I must, however, admit that some "plain Christians" use the language of the seventh chapter of Romans "to express their feelings." And I shall not attempt to decide whether "their feelings" are wrong, or the "language" they "use to express" them is improperly applied. There may be many in the churches whose spiritual condition is accurately defined in the portion of Scripture under examination. And there may be many others who, from bad instruction, have always been accustomed to use this language in relation to themselves, who have never particularly examined the question of the propriety

of this application of it. The question, however, to be settled is, whether the language of Paul in the seventh of Romans is really descriptive of a regenerate state—of the feelings of St. Paul after his conversion. Now let us contrast one passage of this chapter with what our author says upon another portion of the epistle. Upon chap. vi, 11, “Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin,” Mr. Barnes remarks, “So that sin shall have no influence or control over you, any more than the objects of this world have over the dead in their graves.” And again, upon verse 2, “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” he observes, “It is impossible for those who are *dead* to act as if they were alive. To be *dead* to a thing is a strong expression, denoting that it has no influence over us. A man that is dead is uninfluenced and unaffected by the affairs of this life. When it is said, therefore, that a Christian is *dead to sin*, the sense is, that it has lost its influence over him; he is not subject to it; he is, in regard to that, as the man in the grave is to the busy scenes and cares of this life.”

This, then, we may fairly conclude, is the commentator’s view of Christian experience—that it consists in being dead to sin, that is, delivered from it—“that it has lost its influence over him.” And yet upon chap. vii, 14, which he says “accords with the experience of Christians, and not with sinners,” he says, “Sold under sin, is borrowed from the practice of sell-

ing captives taken in war, as slaves. It here means to deliver to the power of any one, so that he shall be dependent on his will and control." And he proceeds to apply his illustration, and says, "He [Paul] was subject to it, [sin,] and under its control;" that "it had such an influence over him as to lead him to commit it," &c. Now let any one bring these two expositions together and see how they harmonize. The Christian is *dead to sin*, that is, "it has lost its influence over him; he is not subject to it; he is in regard to that, as the man in the grave is to the busy scenes and cares of this life." And yet St. Paul describes the same character when he says he is *sold under sin*, that is, according to our commentator, "he was subject to it, and under its control—it had such an influence over him as to lead him to commit it!!!" Now had this author intended to contradict himself as directly as possible in these expositions, could he have done it more effectually? Dr. Hodge involves himself in the same inconsistency, though his phraseology is a little more guarded. The principles of interpretation adopted by these gentlemen are radically wrong, and it is not marvelous that they conflict with themselves.

Now I affirm, on the contrary, that the language of the seventeenth chapter of Romans does not accord "with the experience of Christians;" and our learned commentators themselves, in other places, apply language to "the experience of Christians" utterly at war with

this, they themselves being permitted in both instances to give their own construction of it. Into similar inconsistencies is every commentator drawn who takes the same view. He is compelled to give a sense to the language of St. Paul in the sixth and eighth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, which cannot be made to harmonize with what is found in the seventh chapter, upon the hypothesis that he is speaking of the same character. Common propriety and common sense will necessarily forbid our confounding *bondage* and *liberty*—*abject slavery* and *perfect freedom*. No powers of criticism can ever reconcile them—no sophistry can make the effort even plausible.*

Rosenmuller's views are as follows :—

“Εγώ δε σαρκικός εἰμι.] I indeed am weak, carried away by vile affections ; or I am given up to them. Εγώ, again the apostle speaks in his own person concerning any one not a Christian, who may be either a Jew or a heathen. I wonder that Coppius has assented to the opinion of those who think that Paul said this concerning himself, and also concerning all Christians. This seems evidently contrary not only to all the words immediately following, but also to the entire design of the apostle, and the whole thread of his discourse. Indeed, he wishes to show that no man can easily be amended in heart by the law alone ; that the Mosaic law also wants the power to renew the

* For the argument in its full force, see Dr. Whitby on Romans vii, as in large work, pp. 316–321.

heart, and that a man long accustomed to sin labors under such infirmity of mind, that when he may most wish and desire to follow the law, he finds himself unequal to this task; and he experiences so great and continual a contest between the animal and rational propensity, that he does that which he does not approve and is unwilling to do, and cannot accomplish that which he approves and desires to follow; but there is in the Christian religion this power of amending the minds of men, which alone is able to imbue one with the strength necessary to holy living. See particularly chap. viii, verses 2, 3, where the apostle teaches expressly that the νόμος τοῦ πνεύματος τῆς ζωῆς, supplies that which neither the law of Moses nor any other law ever yet furnished or can furnish."

Dr. Bloomfield, on Rom. vii, 14, says:—

"In the interpretation of these words commentators differ. Augustine, and most of the early modern ones, (especially those of the Calvinistic school,) maintain that the apostle here speaks of *himself*, and of *regenerate Christians*, and means this as the language of penitent remorse. But after all that has been urged in favor of this interpretation by Doddridge, Teller, and especially by Carpzov, (to whose note I refer the reader,) it may justly be considered as untenable."*

Professor Stuart, in his learned commentary

* See Bloomfield's Critical Digest, also his Greek Testament with English notes.

upon this much-contested passage, supposes "the apostle to be here speaking of himself when in a *legal state*, or under the law, and before he was united to Christ." And he says, "The most ancient fathers of the church, without a dissenting voice, so far as we have any means of ascertaining their views, were united in the belief, that an *unregenerate, unsanctified* person is described in Rom. vii, 5-25. So Origen, Tertullian, Chrysostom, and Theodoret. In this state the views of the church remained down to the time of Augustine."

After giving the names of the principal commentators who follow Augustine, he proceeds: "On the other hand, besides all the ancient Greek, and some of the Latin fathers, there are many distinguished men who have defended the sentiment which has been above exhibited. Such are, Erasmus, Raphel, Episcopius, Limborch, Turretine, Le Clerc, Heumann, Bucer, Schomer, Franke, G. Arnold, Bengel, Rienhard, Storr, Flatt, Knapp, Tholuck, and, as far as I know, all the evangelical commentators of the present time on the continent of Europe. Most of the English Episcopal Church, also, for many years, and not a few of the Scotch, Dutch, and English Presbyterian and Congregational divines, have adopted the same interpretation. I cannot but believe that the time is not far distant when there will be but one opinion among intelligent Christians about the passage in question; as there was but one before the dispute of Augustine with Pelagius. In this respect

there is ground of trust that the ancient and modern churches will yet fully harmonize." For the argument at length, see "Stuart's Commentary" *in loc.*

I need not here insert the expositions and arguments of Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher, and the Wesleyan commentators. These are so generally read, that a simple reference to them will be sufficient.*

I have now considered the leading passages of Scripture which are adduced in proof of the necessary continuance of indwelling sin through life. I now leave it to the candid to determine whether these scriptures afford that doctrine the smallest support. Can any one go so far as to alledge that in these proof-texts there is sufficient evidence to make the doctrine which they are brought to prove an article of faith, and to brand the opposite view as heresy? So far as this many have gone; and the position is maintained by distinguished and learned ministers at the present day. How any right-minded Christian divine can stake so much upon a theory so slenderly sustained is indeed strange, and must be left without judgment upon our part. But as for us, let us make our appeal to the law and the testimony, and then abide the result. If we hold no doctrine which is condemned by Christ or his holy apostles, we may

* Those who may wish to consult these authorities, I would refer to Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, Fletcher's Last Check to Antinomianism, Clarke's, Coke's, and Benson's Commentaries.

well forego the good opinion of men who judge of our doctrinal views *a priori*, without law or evidence. We must not, however, treat them uncharitably. They think themselves right. What they alledge in favor of their views looks to them like proof, and all we can adduce on the other hand has with them no weight. Well, here we must rest the matter until God shall give more light, or perhaps until the light of eternity, which will correct all errors, shall dawn upon the darkened understanding.

LECTURE VIII.

PERIOD WHEN BELIEVERS MAY BE ENTIRELY SANCTIFIED—ERRORS CONCERNING.

“Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid! How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” Rom. vi, 1, 2.

I SHALL next proceed to an examination of opposing theories. Our opponents do not merely deny the attainableness of entire sanctification in this life, but, on the other hand, maintain that sin cannot be wholly removed until death comes in to complete the work of its destruction. As we have seen, the Rev. Dr. Snodgrass maintains “that the dissolution of the body, as followed by its resurrection, is one of the appointed means of sanctification.”

So those who oppose us have a theory to maintain. And after answering the leading objections which they have seen proper to urge against us, it will be in place to carry the war into their camp. I shall now proceed to offer reasons against this notion of the necessary continuance of indwelling sin until death. There will be no chance here, with the class of theologians who maintain the proposition I now oppose, for a play upon the word *necessary*. We agree, I presume, in the sense in which the *possibility* or *impossibility* in question is to be understood. Calvin says, "*I call that impossible which has never happened yet, and which is prevented by the ordination and decree of God from ever happening in the future.*" And Dr. Snodgrass says, "As to the meaning of the word ATTAINABLE, we have no other purpose than to use it in its most obvious and popular sense—as importing the *practicability* of the thing to which it refers. An attainable thing is something the attainment of which is practicable; an unattainable thing is something the attainment of which is not practicable."* I understand, then, Calvin and Dr. Snodgrass to agree in the doctrine that entire sanctification in this life is "impossible," being "prevented by the ordination and decree of God," "is something the attainment of which is impracticable," and this I understand logically to imply that the existence of sin in the regenerate until death is a necessary consequence of a divine

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, p. 29.

arrangement. 'The main principle then being thus understood, I object to it for the following reasons :—

1. It makes the continuance of sin in believers until death their misfortune, and not their fault.

I do not admit, nor do I see how any one can rationally assert, that just blame can be attached to a moral agent for not attaining what is "impracticable—impossible—prevented by the ordination and decree of God." All the explanations offered here, either by the old or the new school Calvinists, are lost upon me, for I cannot feel their force. I can see no grounds of moral justice upon which I am blameworthy for the continuance of sin in my heart upon this principle. If it is in accordance with the divine arrangement, for the purpose of securing some good end, that believers are through life to be annoyed by their corruptions, who is in fault if those corruptions are not wholly eradicated? 'The argument is plain, and can scarcely be improved by illustration. And though to our opponents it may look like a mere bubble, it will probably continue to appear to us like an immovable rock.

'The simple fact, then, that all are conscious that their inward corruptions, in whole and in part, all of them, are wrong, entirely unnecessary, and offensive to God, is sufficient to show the radical error of the position I oppose. For who that believes that the destruction of his inward corruptions is "prevented by the decree of God,"

until "the dissolution of the body," which, in the wisdom of God, is constituted "one of the appointed means of sanctification," can feel it very wrong to suffer on under the weight of "the body of death" "all the days of his appointed time until his change come?" Who will condemn himself for the continued molestations of the brood of vipers, which God has determined to leave to nestle in his heart until the appointed remedy arrives? From this argument we are naturally led on to another, which grows out of it.

2. The doctrine that entire sanctification is unattainable in this life effectually nourishes spiritual sloth.

Who will ever make a serious effort to get rid of a *necessary evil*? Hooker, with an evidence of philosophical truth that no man can gainsay or doubt, says:—"The will, notwithstanding, doth not incline to have or do that which reason teacheth to be good, unless the same do also teach it to be possible. For albeit the appetite, being more general, may wish anything which seemeth good, be it never so impossible; yet for such things, the reasonable will of man doth never seek. Let reason teach impossibility in anything, and the will of man doth let it go; a thing impossible it doth not affect, the impossibility thereof being manifest."*

Can Dr. Snodgrass rationally seek entire sanctification in this life? Can he urge others

* Ecclesiastical Polity, book i, chap. 7.

to seek it? Can he put forth a single voluntary effort to shake off the body of sin? I see not how he can. Will he not naturally practice according to the views of Cartwright, the great father of the Nonconformists, and opponent of Whitgift, who says, "We may not pray in this life to be free from all sin, because we must always pray, 'Forgive us our sins?'" And Witsius, the great Calvinistic theologian, who says, "Seeing God has expressly declared that he does not give his people absolute perfection in this life, it is the duty of all to acquiesce in this dispensation of the divine will, nor are they allowed to beg of God to grant them that perfection here, which they know he has not appointed for this, but for the other life?"*

These are the logical results and practical workings of the doctrine here opposed. And what other results can rationally be expected in any instance? Who can pray for, or use any efforts to obtain, what he firmly believes to be unattainable? or, which amounts to the same thing, seek now what God "has not appointed for this life, but for the other?"

Perhaps our opponents will say, it is our duty to oppose sin even though it may not be totally destroyed in this life: we must go on conquering and subduing it as far as is practicable, and expect the final triumph after death: that this view presents sufficient motives for action.

But this does not neutralize our argument; for still it remains a fact, according to the theory

* Economy of the Covenants, vol. ii, p. 61.

here opposed, that though sin may be kept under, it cannot be destroyed until death. Now how would this principle operate in other things? Apply it to the case of the intemperate. Tell them that temperance is a gradual work, that never can be completed in this life—that the intemperate cannot be perfectly reformed so long as they live: they may get the better of their habits, and it is their duty to reform, but that death “is one of the appointed means” of cure, and consequently it is vain for any one to expect to become perfectly temperate in this life:—how many drunkards would be reformed upon this plan? What effect would this doctrine produce upon the great temperance reform now so gloriously progressing? I can anticipate the answer. And I am aware that no valid reason can be given why the doctrine I here oppose should not have the same paralyzing effect upon the soul of the Christian that the gradual plan, as above stated, would have upon the efforts of the intemperate to reform. It may be said, The cases are not parallel. But I see not in what respects, so far as the points in question are concerned, the parallel is not perfect; nor why the gradualist is not in the one case as much as in the other liable to the charge of cutting the sinews of exertion.

3. The doctrine that death “is one of the appointed means of sanctification” is attributing to death a work which, in the word of God, is always attributed to other instrumentalities, but never to death.

We read of "being sanctified by the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv, 16; 1 Pet. i, 2,—of being sanctified "through the truth," John xvii, 17, 19,—of being sanctified "by the blood of the covenant," Heb. x, 29,—and "the blood of Christ," Heb. ix, 14. See also 1 John i, 7. Of being sanctified "by faith," Acts xv, 9, and xxvi, 18. But where do we read of *being sanctified by death*? If the hypothesis I oppose were true, should we not expect to find the work of sanctification, or at least the completion of it, somewhere in the Bible predicated of death as its instrumental cause, in language somewhat similar to that which is employed in relation to the truth, the word, faith, &c.? But where is that language to be found? Not in the Bible; and I would that I could say, Nor in the writings of any respectable Christian author; but alas! I have not the happiness to be able to say this.

4. It is adding a qualification to the Scripture doctrine of sanctification, not only over and above anything we have in the Bible upon the subject, but altogether contrary to the whole tenor of God's word.

The word of God says, "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." The command, "Be ye holy," is now urged. The duty of seeking entire sanctification is urged as of present obligation. "Go on to perfection;" "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Now where is the qualification

of our opponents authorized? Where is it said, *Nevertheless, these commands and exhortations cannot be fully carried out until the dissolution of the body?* Would not this give a new feature to the Christian system? Would it not contradict its entire spirit and sense upon the subject of the necessary preparation for heaven? So it seems to me; and of course the theory I oppose appears to me to be “another gospel”—a doctrine which I am bound not only not to receive, but to oppose to the utmost of my limited capacity.

5. The doctrine that “the dissolution of the body is one of the appointed means of sanctification” is dishonorable to Christ.

Christ came “to abolish death,”—“that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” 2 Tim. i, 10; Heb. ii, 14. And it is said, “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” 1 Cor. xv, 26. And now shall death—ignoble death—said to be under the *power* of the *devil*, and called “the last enemy,” come to the Saviour’s help? Must this foe to man be the instrument of accomplishing the highest purposes of redeeming mercy? Will all other instrumentality come short of the consummation of the great work of human emancipation from the corruptions of sin? And does the peculiar honor of finally triumphing over the power of sin belong to death? The saints in heaven are represented as celebrating the *blood of Christ*, as the instrument of their *redemption*, (Rev. v, 9,) but seem

not to know that *death* acted a prominent part in the business. And I have no doubt that if our opponents ever get to heaven, and I charitably hope they will, they will have forgotten their present theory, and will join in the same song, of ascribing their salvation to the blood of Christ alone. Christ, the great Captain of our salvation, needs not death to help him in the accomplishment of his work. He will destroy sin, death, and the devil, and triumph by his own power over every foe. He will "deliver those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage," by his grace and Spirit, through the word of his truth, without dependence upon his subjugated foe for the consummation of the purposes of his mercy.

6. The doctrine of the necessary continuance of sin until death, and that death is the means of the final extirpation of sin from the soul of the believer, supposes a connection between sin and the body which is wholly unauthorized either by Scripture or sound philosophy.

I know not upon what approved system of physics or psychology sin is made to hold such a connection with the body that it cannot be separated from the soul until the body is dissolved by death. I have always been accustomed to suppose that *sin* was *in the soul* exclusively. But let us hear the statement of the opposite view from the learned Dr. Snodgrass. He says,—

"The idea of a perfectly holy spirit remaining in connection with a corruptible body, would

present *an incongruity*, to which no parallel could be found in any of the other arrangements or works of God. It is not only true that his plans are wise, but also that their wisdom can be generally seen and appreciated by the candid and careful observer. But who could regard it as fit or reasonable, that, after the souls of believers are delivered from the last taint of corruption, they should still be confined to such a body as this? As an apostle describes it, it is a '*vile*' body—a body possessing many properties, in view of which we have reason to be humbled—a body distinguished by great infirmity and weakness—easily brought into a state of languor and fatigue—subject to innumerable ills and distresses—furnishing many occasions of temptation to sin, and acting as a constant weight upon the upward tendencies and movements of the soul.”*

The confidence with which our author pronounces the case supposed of “a perfectly holy spirit remaining in connection with a corruptible body” “*an incongruity*,” and decides what would be “fit and reasonable” in the case, would seem to imply that the question is to turn, at least in some measure, upon our general notions of *congruity* and *fitness*, and that he at least is capable of judging of what would be *congruous* and *fit* in the premises. But though I am far from conceding that there is anything incongruous in the supposition, everything considered, yet I doubt whether this is the proper

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, pp. 90, 91.

test of truth in cases of the class. There are many things clearly revealed in the word of God which appear incongruous, "to which no parallel could be found in any of the other arrangements or works of God," which we are still bound to receive as truths. This the learned author will scarcely question.

But what *incongruity* is there in the conception of a being clad in the habiliments of mortality, and yet perfectly conformed to the will of God? Was there any such striking incongruity in the person and life of Jesus Christ? If so, I am not aware of it. And considering the *amplitude* of the provisions of grace, and the *power* of that system of human restoration constituted by Christ, where is the incongruity in supposing the sufficiency of that system to give present and immediate deliverance from sin—to enable the believer to stand "complete in all the will of God?" Is not *sin* in a *believer* a most glaring *incongruity*? So it appears to me.

The force of the gentleman's argument, however, seems to turn upon the infirmities, vileness, and corruptibility of the body. I do not doubt that all this is the fruit of sin; but that it necessarily implies the continuance of sin, inward or outward, I do doubt. "As an apostle describes it," (Phil. iii, 21,) he says, "It is a 'vile' body." This is true; but where is the evidence that the term *vile* implies *moral defilement*?

The word *ταπεινωσις*, here rendered *vile*, according to Dr. Robinson, signifies "a making

low, humiliation, depression. In the New Testament, 'the being brought low,' low estate, humiliation."* And he notes the following places where the word occurs :—Luke i, 48 : ἐπεβλεψεν ἐπὶ τὴν ταπεινωσιν τῆς δούλης αὐτοῦ—"Hath regarded the *low estate* of his handmaiden." Acts viii, 33 : ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει κ. τ. λ.—"In his humiliation his judgment was taken away," &c. James i, 10 : ὁ δὲ πλουσιος ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ—"But the rich, in that he is made low." In the Septuagint the word is used in the place of the Hebrew שָׁפָל, —*lowness, a low place or condition* ; (see Psa. cxxxvi, 23 ;) in the common version rendered "low estate ;" and עָנָה, —*affliction, oppression*, Neh. ix, 9, rendered "affliction."†

How, then, is it to the gentleman's purpose at all that the apostle calls the body *vile*, that is, low, humble, afflicted, &c.? Does that prove at all that the soul, so long as it is associated with the body, must be the seat of sinful affections? Not that I can see. All the *vileness* here attributed to the body no more makes for the doctrine of the necessary continuance of sin in the soul until death, than it proves that the Saviour was a sinner because it is said, "in his *humiliation* (ταπεινώσει, *lowliness, or vileness* if you please) his judgment was taken away."

It will be proper here to notice the manner in which our author meets the objection to his

* See Greek and English Lexicon.

† See the Hebrew and Greek texts, and all approved Hebrew and Greek Lexicons.

notion of "sinful flesh," which, I have already intimated, is founded upon the perfect purity of Christ.

"If it should occur here, in the form of an objection to the view just presented, that Jesus Christ was perfectly holy, while he tabernacled in a human body, it is only necessary to say, that the cases are not parallel; because his body was not polluted by sin. It was not *sinful* flesh, but only '*the likeness of sinful flesh*,' in which he was made. God did not suffer his 'Holy One to see corruption.' He assumed our nature, as far as this could be done, 'without sin;' and, that a difference might exist between his nature and ours, in respect to sin, he was not the offspring of man by ordinary generation. The circumstances attending his introduction into the world were peculiar. He came on a special visitation of grace and good-will to men; and he came in such a way as to bear their griefs and carry their sorrows, without participating, personally, in any of their corruptions, either in body or mind."*

I admit there is not a perfect parallel between Christ and the holiest man that ever lived. Nor is this at all necessary to the argument. All that is necessary is to show that Christ was man—that he possessed a material, mortal, *ταπεινωσις*, *vile body*, and *was yet without sin*. But the learned doctor says, "It was not *sinful* flesh, but only '*the likeness of sinful flesh*,' in which he was made." There is something a

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, pp. 91, 92.

little too fanciful in this exposition, and I am not at all certain I understand it. I suppose Dr. S. does not intend, with certain ancient heretics, to deny that Christ had a proper human body : and yet I scarcely know what else he can mean. I can scarcely conceive that he has such an idea of the *sinfulness* of human flesh as would make sin an adjunct of the material part of man in the abstract, or in the concrete. By “sinful flesh” I understand human flesh, associated as it is with a fallen spiritual nature ; and by God’s sending his Son “in the likeness of sinful flesh,” simply that *he took upon him a proper human body.*

Professor Stuart’s note upon this clause is just and rational :—“*God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh*—That is, God sending his Son, clothed with a body like that of corrupt and sinful men ; that is, with a fleshly or corporeal nature like theirs.”*

But, lest the Andover professor should be a little too new-fangled to have much weight with Dr. S., I will give him authority that he will respect. The note of the Westminster divines upon this passage is as follows :—“*In the likeness of sinful flesh*’—Gr., *flesh of sin*. Christ took our nature upon him with all our natural affections ; yet without sin ; and therefore the apostle here saith, God sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, not in the likeness of flesh, as if he had not taken true flesh upon him : but in the similitude of *sinful flesh*.”†

* Commentary on the place.

† Annotations on the place.

Dr. S. says truly that the body of Christ "was not polluted by sin." But was it not truly a mortal, corruptible body? God not suffering "his Holy One to see corruption" is no proof to the contrary of this; but does rather imply it. For the resurrection and immortality of Christ's body are here ascribed to an extraordinary effort of divine power.

What, then, is the result of this investigation? Has any evidence been adduced that sin is so connected with our physical constitution, that we cannot get rid of it but by the aid of death? Is there any proof that sin is in any other way connected with the body than as the body is the instrument of the soul? Is the weakness and degradation of the body through sin so united or identified with its constituent elements that the body must be dissolved by death and resumed in the resurrection, before the soul can be entirely sanctified? Let those who can take the affirmative of these questions go on and swallow without hesitation all the dogmas of Romanism. The theory is wholly unsupported either by Scripture, reason, or common sense.

I am aware that a portion of those who oppose the doctrine of Christian perfection do not go the whole length with Dr. Snodgrass, though from the sanction of the "Presbyterian Board of Publication," I fear his views are but too extensively received. Some there are, however, who will give death no part in the great work of sanctification, who still think that God's

appointed time for the entire sanctification of his people is *just before death*, or *at the moment the soul leaves the body*. This view is not quite so exceptionable as that which I have endeavored to refute, but is far from being authorized by Scripture.

Before leaving the consideration of mistaken views as to the *time when* the work of entire sanctification may be expected, I must notice a theory differing materially from the one already noticed, and yet it may well be doubted whether it is not of equally injurious tendency.

The view to which I refer is, that the soul is entirely sanctified when it is justified—that regeneration, which takes place at the time of justification, is identical with entire sanctification.

1. I urge that this view is clearly in opposition to the views of our standard writers. The doctrines of Mr. Wesley's sermon on "Sin in Believers," already noticed, are wholly inconsistent with the idea of entire sanctification. The same view is clearly expressed in the following questions and answers:—"When does inward sanctification begin? In the moment a man is justified. (Yet sin remains in him, yea, the seed of all sin, till he is sanctified throughout.) From that time a believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace."*

"By what 'fruit of the Spirit' may we 'know that we are of God,' even in the highest sense?

* Plain Account, pp. 48, 49.

By love, joy, peace, always abiding ; by invincible long-suffering, patience, resignation ; by gentleness, triumphing over all provocation ; by goodness, mildness, sweetness, tenderness of spirit ; by fidelity, simplicity, godly sincerity ; by meekness, calmness, evenness of spirit ; by temperance, not only in food and sleep, but in all things natural and spiritual.

“But what great matter is there in this ? Have we not all this when we are justified ? What, total resignation to the will of God, without any mixture of self-will ? gentleness, without any touch of anger, even the moment we are provoked ? love to God, without the least love to the creature, but in and for God, excluding all pride ? love to man, excluding all envy, all jealousy, and rash judging ? meekness, keeping the whole soul inviolably calm ? and temperance in all things ? Deny that any ever came up to this, if you please ; but do not say all who are justified do.

“But some who are newly justified do. What then will you say to these ? If they really do, I will say they are sanctified ; saved from sin in that moment ; and that they never need lose what God has given, or feel sin any more.

“But certainly this is an exempt case. It is otherwise with the generality of those that are justified : they feel in themselves more or less pride, anger, self-will, a heart bent to backsliding. And, till they have gradually mortified these, they are not fully renewed in love.”*

* Plain Account, pp. 124. 125.

Mr. Fletcher gives us his views upon this point, with some reasons for them, as follows :

“ We do not deny that the remains of the carnal mind still cleave to imperfect Christians ; and that when the expression ‘ carnal ’ is softened and qualified, it may, in a low sense, be applied to such professors as those Corinthians were to whom St. Paul said, ‘ I could not speak to you as to spiritual.’ But could not the apostle be yet ‘ spoken to as a spiritual man ? And does he not allow, that, even in the corrupted churches of Corinth and Galatia, there were some truly spiritual men—some adult, perfect Christians ? See 1 Cor. xiv, 37, and Galatians vi, 1. ”*

Again,—

“ The same Spirit of faith which initially purifies our hearts, when we cordially believe the pardoning love of God, completely cleanses them, when we fully believe his sanctifying love.’ ”†

In addition to these quotations, which certainly suppose sanctification subsequent to, and not always immediately connected with, justification, we may refer to this author’s “ Address to Imperfect Believers,” the whole of which proceeds upon the supposition that there is a class of “ believers,” and, of course, persons who are justified, who are not yet fully sanctified. Upon the principle under consideration, that masterly effort, and, if we rightly judge, the best part of the treatise, is grossly absurd : for

* Last Check, sec. 9.

† Ibid., sec. 19.

it is a strong effort to urge on "believers" to an attainment which they have already reached, and which is a necessary concomitant of justifying faith.

Mr. Watson takes the Wesleyan position, and sustains it by Scripture.

"That a distinction exists between a regenerate state and a state of entire and perfect holiness will be generally allowed. Regeneration, we have seen, is concomitant with justification; but the apostles, in addressing the body of believers in the churches to whom they wrote their epistles, set before them, both in the prayers they offer in their behalf, and in the exhortations they administer, a still higher degree of deliverance from sin, as well as a higher growth in Christian virtues. Two passages only need be quoted to prove this:—1 Thess. v, 23, 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' 2 Cor. vii, 1, 'Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' In both these passages deliverance from sin is the subject spoken of; and the prayer in one instance, and the exhortation in the other, go to the extent of the entire sanctification of 'the soul' and 'spirit,' as well as of the 'flesh' or 'body,' from all sin; by which can only be meant our complete deliverance from all spiritual pollution, all inward deprava-

tion of the heart, as well as that which, expressing itself outwardly by the indulgence of the senses, is called 'filthiness of the flesh.'**

2. To the doctrine that entire sanctification is a distinct work, and subsequent to justification, we, as ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, have fully set our seal on our full induction into the ministerial office. In the Discipline, chap. i, sec. 9, the fourth question and the answer to it are as follows: "What method do we use in receiving a preacher at the conference? After solemn fasting and prayer, every person proposed shall then be asked, before the conference, the following questions, (with any others which may be thought necessary,) viz.:—Have you faith in Christ? Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life? Are you groaning after it?" These questions we have answered in the affirmative. The point that I conceive plainly couched in this passage, and which I wish here particularly noticed, is, that it is supposed that "faith in Christ," that is, *justifying faith*, does not necessarily imply "perfect love." The candidate must have this "faith," and must, at least, be *expecting* to be made "perfect in love," and be "groaning after it."

3. The position that entire sanctification always accompanies justification, is not in accordance with fact and experience.

* Institutes, part ii, chap. 29.

Who are those among us who are concerned for this blessing of perfect love? Are they those who have never been justified? or those who, having been justified, have fallen from that state? Not these, surely; but those who retain their justification, and do honor to the Christian name; those who are most active and useful in the church. These are the persons who are most athirst for the blessing of a clean heart and entire consecration to God.

The unregenerate, when under conviction, do not feel the burden of their corruptions so much as the guilt of their sins. They seek pardon and acceptance, and not entire sanctification. And it may well be questioned whether any one ever fully sees the hidden corruptions of his heart until aided by the light of converting grace. The language of the penitent is, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" "Remember not against me former iniquities!" "O, blot out all my iniquities for thy name's sake!" His guilt is his great burden, and its removal in justification the object of his desires and prayers. When he finds pardon, he rejoices in God, and for a time seems to think all his enemies slain. But when his first ecstasies subside, he finds there are yet within him the remains of corruption. Upon this discovery it is not strange for him to conclude that he has been deceived in his former conclusions, that he was really justified and born again, or, if not, that he has lost the blessing of pardon. Farther investigation of his feelings, and a

thorough trial of the evidence upon which he relies, by the infallible test of God's word, leads him to conclude that he had indeed passed a great change—that God had brought him fully into the light of the new birth, and that it is by the aid of this light that he is enabled to discover the great deep of his own heart. From this point the disciple of Christ advances with greater or less rapidity to the high ground of holiness promised in the gospel.

The sketch I have here given will be found to accord with the experience of Christians in general, so that it may be presumed to constitute a *law* in the great process of spiritual renovation. If there ever was an instance of one who, before justification, had a distinct and comprehensive idea of his inward corruptions, and who sought and obtained *entire* sanctification at the time of his justification, it must be considered, as Mr. Wesley very justly says, “an exempt case;” and I will add, it is such a case as never came under my own observation.

Again. Is it not presuming too far to suppose that those who have professed this high and holy state were mistaken—that they do not understand the character of their own experience? To say nothing of those among ourselves who have made professions of this kind, and have given the most indubitable proofs of their sincerity, let us refer to Messrs. Fletcher, Bramwell, Carvosso; Mrs. Rogers, Mrs. Fletcher, Lady Maxwell, and a host of others who have

died in the faith. All these explicitly declare that they received a distinct witness of this *second blessing*; that while in a justified state they felt the workings of inward corruption: they sought by prayer and faith for deliverance, and obtained a clear and satisfactory evidence of entire sanctification; so that they "reckoned themselves dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Jesus Christ." They now had the witness of perfect love, distinct from the witness of pardon which was communicated on their justification. Now shall we say they mistook the operations of their own minds? This we might do if there were anything in their experience contrary to the word of God; or if they had in other instances exhibited signs of mental aberration or incorrigible enthusiasm, we might be justified in supposing that they were self-deceived. But of the persons above named we can form no such conclusion. In all they say on other points, reason and the true spirit of the gospel are predominant. Why should we conclude them entirely beside themselves here? Indeed, if the gospel remains the same that it was in the days of John and Paul, we have good reason to conclude them in their sober senses even in their highest professions.

But there are multitudes in all the Christian churches who exhibit the fruits, and have the inward testimony, of a state of justification, but who do not enjoy the great blessing of perfect love. What shall we say concerning these

upon the hypothesis here opposed? We must, as far as I can see, come to one of the following conclusions concerning them. Either they were never really justified, or they have lost their entire sanctification without losing their justification, or they have lost both the one and the other, and are, consequently, in a back-slidden state.

Can we, consistently with charity, come to the first conclusion, viz., that all those Christians who are conscious of the absence of the entire sanctification, or perfect love, in question, were never really born of the Spirit or justified? Perhaps none would, for a moment, embrace such a conclusion. And will any who hold the identity of the new birth and entire sanctification fall upon the second supposition, viz., that these persons have lost the blessing of perfect love, and yet retain that of regeneration? This conclusion seems incongruous and even absurd. For if these two things are identical, how can they be separated? If there is any reason which goes to identify regeneration and entire sanctification in their commencement, does not the same reason identify them in their progress? If they are one and the same, how can they be separated under any circumstances, or at any time?

Well, who will embrace the third supposition, viz., that all who were ever justified, and do not now enjoy the blessing of entire sanctification, have fallen away from the favor of God, and are not in a state of gracious acceptance?

I think few will hazard such a conclusion as this. The result, then, to which I come is, that the theory which asserts that entire sanctification invariably takes place when justification and regeneration take place is inconsistent with fact and experience.

4. I next urge that the view here opposed is inconsistent with the language of Scripture upon the subject.

In the quotation from Mr. Fletcher we have a reference to the defective churches of Corinth and Galatia—the fact that they were not in a state of entire sanctification, being in a sense “carnal,” and yet that they were in a sense “spiritual,” urged in proof of the error of the doctrine here opposed. A stronger proof is that of Mr. Watson, deduced from 1 Thess. v, 23, and 2 Cor. vii, 1, and which I need not here repeat. I wish, however, these Scripture proofs to be taken into the account in connection with this argument.

To these Scripture arguments I will add several others. In John, chap. xvii, we have our Saviour's prayer to the Father, a portion of which concerns his disciples. These, he says, “are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” And again claims them as *his*—“I pray,” says he, “for those thou hast given me.” And for them he offers up this prayer: “Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth,” ver. 17. Now, though the language of Christ, in this case, implies, that those for whom he prays are his by adoption, yet the prayer for

their *sanctification* implies that this great work had not been completed in them.

Again, (in Heb. vi, 1,) the Hebrew Christians, who must certainly be considered to be in a gracious state, are exhorted to "go on to perfection," which would scarcely be expected if they had already attained perfection.

Finally, in 1 John i, 7, we read, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Observe, 1. In this passage we are supposed to be "in the light;" and, 2. That by *walking* in this "light" we may be *cleansed from all sin*. To suppose that the moment we enter the *light* we are already *cleansed from all sin*, would be to make the language of this passage absurd. We are nowhere told that we must "walk in the light as he is in the light" in order to obtain justification, nor would it be consistent to urge us to do anything in order to the attainment of what we already most assuredly have in possession.

Here I must conclude this lecture with a single reflection. It is lamentable that controversy must be employed in the discussion of the clearest and most vital truths of our holy religion. When we feel disposed to be hortatory, we are met with objections and difficulties; and instead of pressing our theme we must go into the drudgery of proving it, or of shaking off from it some false gloss, which, like an incubus, paralyzes all the sensibilities, and effectually bars the minds of many against its recep-

tion. This state of facts I have regretted in no case more deeply than in relation to the subject of these lectures. If there is one doctrine of more interest to Christians than another, the doctrine of entire sanctification should have the pre-eminence in their consideration. But the difficulty with which the subject has been encompassed by the speculations of men, who have treated it with reference to a theory, go far toward rendering it, at least to common minds, one of the inexplicable mysteries, and so of destroying its legitimate effects. The most prominent of these difficulties I have attempted in these lectures to obviate, with what success others must judge. I hope I have not "darkened counsel by words without knowledge," but, on the other hand, have given some relief to the candid, anxious inquirer after "the old paths."

LECTURE IX.

DIRECT SCRIPTURE PROOFS.

"This is the will of God, even your sanctification."
1 Thess. iv, 3.

THE purpose of the present lecture shall be to present the direct Scripture evidence of the attainableness of a state of entire sanctification in this life.

But before I proceed to state the proofs, I

wish to direct attention to the results at which I have arrived in the preceding lectures. A review of these will show that I now approach the direct Scripture proof of the main question with a strong probability in its favor. This probability, it will be seen, has accumulated with every successive step in the progress of the argument.

It was first shown that persons in a gracious state were urged to proceed to higher attainments. In the next place, these attainments, as clearly defined in the New Testament, were found to imply a state of holiness above the common grade—implying, *a death to sin, and a life to righteousness*: then the objections against the doctrine were duly weighed and found untenable. And in the last lecture several theories upon the subject of the time when we are authorized to expect entire sanctification were examined, and the position taken by our opponents, that sin necessarily continues in the soul until the death of the body, was shown to be unsupported either by Scripture or sound philosophy.

If, then, I have succeeded in clearing the ground as far as I have proceeded in the argument; if the great elements of the doctrine are settled in the word of God, and no valid objection stands against it; and if the opposite theory is grossly absurd and anti-scriptural, is it not highly probable that our theory is the true one? I say, then, that I approach the direct Scripture proof with a very strong probability in my favor.

Indeed, it is scarcely possible that a theory against which there is no Scripture testimony, or solid objection founded in the nature of things, or God's established plan of action, and in favor of which there are so many probabilities, should be false; and it is not at all possible that it should be a dangerous error. So that if we had not a single explicit proof to alledge from the Bible, our doctrine at least might be presumed to be safe, and not liable to the charge of heresy.

But we have ample Scripture testimony which we suppose directly in point. This I shall now proceed to adduce.

1. I first urge, that God commands us to be perfect. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matt. v, 48. Again: "Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Mark xii, 30. "Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Cor. vii, 1.

I need add no further instances of this class, because if the argument which I base upon these is valid, the evidence they afford is perfectly conclusive; but if unsound, a multitude of passages of the same class would give it no additional strength.

But before I proceed further I must examine

the position taken upon all such passages as contain the words perfection, blameless, entire, &c. When we urge these terms, either found in precepts or examples, our opponents claim the right so to qualify them, as to make them mean little or nothing.

Dr. Snodgrass disposes of these terms thus : "It is not denied that there are *words* and *phrases* employed in Scripture, which, if understood in the greatest latitude of meaning of which they are susceptible, would imply that not a few both of the Old and New Testament saints were without sin. These are such as the words 'perfect,' 'entire,' 'complete,' 'blameless.' It is said of Noah, Job, and others, that they were *perfect*—of all Christians, that they are *complete*—of Zachariah and Elizabeth, that they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord *blameless*. But, it is granted on all hands that these and other terms of similar import are often used in a qualified and restricted sense ; and therefore no decisive proof can be drawn from their appearance in this connection."*

Dr. Woods takes the same ground. After considering several of the passages alledged in this argument, he comes to this result : "As a limited sense clearly belongs to some of the passages which seem, at first view, to favor the doctrine of 'perfection,' it is quite *possible* it may belong to *others*, and it would be going too fast and too far to decide at once, that *any* of

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, pp. 33, 34.

that class of texts must be taken in the highest and most absolute sense.”*

Now, if these learned divines have taken legitimate ground upon the passages in question, we must admit that they do not certainly prove our theory of perfection. But they proceed upon a false principle of interpretation. Their ground is this: That as the terms perfection, blameless, &c., are *often* used in a qualified sense, therefore they are not decisive—we are not permitted to give them their full literal sense when employed in connection with Christian experience and character, as they are often used in a qualified sense in other connections. And I will now show that the principle of exegesis here assumed is contrary to all good authority, is rejected by themselves in the consideration of other topics, and, if generally adopted, would lead to the most dangerous results.

The sound principle of exegesis here violated, and which I say is sustained by the best authority, is, that *language is always to be understood in its literal and natural sense, unless there is something in the nature of the subject to which it is applied which requires the restricted meaning.* Hooker says, “I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that when a literal construction will stand, the furthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the

* Examination of the Doctrine of Perfection, pp. 69, 70.

meaning of words, as alchemy doth or would do the substance of metals, maketh of anything what it listeth, and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing.”*

If it should be urged that the case in question is one of the cases of exception provided for by the rule, it is replied that this is *begging the whole question*. We do not admit this. And our opponents have no right to assume it without proof.

But do our opponents admit the principle which they here adopt in other cases? A case precisely in point is the mode of argument pursued by Universalists. These learned doctors would bring against them all those passages which set forth the duration of future punishment by the terms *eternal, everlasting, &c.* But the Universalist objects: “These and other terms of similar import are often used in a qualified and restricted sense; and therefore no decisive proof can be drawn from their appearance in this connection.” Now how would these gentlemen proceed in this case? Would they admit the Universalist law of exegesis? or would they rather say, The literal sense has the prior claim, and unless you can show, without begging the whole question at issue, that there is something in the nature of the case that requires the restricted sense to be given these terms in the cases in question, you are bound, by all just laws of interpretation, to give them their literal sense. Now shall we permit them,

* Ecclesiastical Polity, book v, chap. 59.

in cases precisely similar, to take opposite positions? Can they honorably adopt a principle of exegesis in one case, and, in another, precisely similar, wholly abandon it, because, forsooth, it would lead them to a result which they would fain avoid?

I now need not, surely, spend much time in showing that the principle of interpretation adopted by these learned doctors would, if followed out, lead to disastrous results. It has already been seen what use Universalists make of it. And but allow men to qualify and restrict the language of Scripture as they please, whenever it comes in the way of their preconceived notions, and what error could not be sustained by the Bible? Where should we find our moorings? The free circulation of the Scriptures would, as Romanists say, be productive of a multitude of heresies.

We are then at full liberty to reject as illegitimate and ruinous the position taken by our opponents in relation to the terms perfection, blameless, &c., and to give them their natural meaning, only limiting them by the nature of the case, as it is revealed, and by explicit passages upon the same subject. Having cleared the way, then, I proceed to my argument.

We are here commanded to "be perfect," to "perfect holiness," and, which amounts to the same thing, to "love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength." All, then, that is necessary to complete the argument is, to prove (if it need proof) that all the requirements of

the gospel are *practicable*. I know Augustine says, "God commands us to do some things that we are not able to do, that we may know what we ought to crave of him." But whoever has a relish for such absurd paradoxes, I have not. I do not believe there *can* be a reason why God should require impossibilities. The supposition is a flat denial of his justice as well as of his goodness. All our feelings and notions of natural justice rise up against it, and the Bible explicitly declares that God's *ways* are *just* and *equal*. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" is a question once asked by "the father of the faithful," and it is one which is very strongly suggested by assertions or implications, that God may, in the affairs of his government, depart from those established principles of justice which he has implanted deep in the human conscience, and which everywhere characterize his own acts.

I rather conclude with Mr. Wesley, that all the requirements of the gospel may be regarded as so many promises. For certainly God would not explicitly require anything that he would not assist us to perform. I regard this position as wholly unassailable. It is one of those evangelical axioms which scarcely need proof. And, indeed, it is seldom directly denied, though it is often indirectly, and by logical consequence, called in question. But in all such cases the individual finds it convenient to cover himself with a cloud of metaphysical distinctions and indefinable subtilties. In such cases sober ar-

gument is useless. When men will mystify the plainest truths, and involve themselves in the grossest absurdities, for the sake of a favorite point, we may pity them, but to render them effective aid is generally out of the question.

Dr. Snodgrass, instead of coming out directly against the principle of this argument, contents himself with running it into a supposed absurdity. The supposed absurdity is, however, a creature of his own imagination, and his effort proves, though he chooses not explicitly to say, that he has no difficulty in supposing *God may require impossibilities!*

2. In the second place, I prove that entire sanctification in the present life is attainable from the provisions of the gospel.

And, *first*, Christ has undertaken the work. The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil. "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Rom. viii, 34. "And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." 2 Cor. v, 15. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Pet. ii, 24.

Secondly. The Holy Spirit is poured out to effect it. "Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Rom. xv, 16.

Thirdly. The word is sent abroad as the grand instrument for its accomplishment. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." John xvii, 17. "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus." Col. i, 28.

Now our argument is this, that all these provisions are made and put in operation without any limitations or restrictions as to the time in which the work should be accomplished, but the same language is held in relation to them as means of entire sanctification that is employed in relation to justification, which it is acknowledged on all hands must take place in this life, and may be had at any time when the conditions are performed. Therefore I conclude, that provision is made for the entire sanctification of believers in this life. But here we meet a formidable objection to our conclusion. "The means may exist, and be known, without being applied in such a way as to secure the end; they are nothing in themselves, and become effectual, only as they are overruled and blessed. And again, if the provision be supposed to refer to the *efficient Agent* in sanctification, then we say, that, while the provision of the gospel is abundant—while the Holy Spirit, who is sent into the world for this purpose, is fully *able* to accomplish the work—it is no legitimate inference from this to affirm, that he will bring it to perfection during the

present life. Whether he will or not, must depend altogether upon himself.”*

And supposing we admit this reasoning correct, what then? Still our conclusion, that entire sanctification is attainable, remains good and valid so long as we are permitted to assume that God would not solemnly announce a provision as made that he did not intend to carry into immediate effect, and we hardly need ask any man's good leave to assume this. To illustrate the subject: Suppose the streets of New-York thronged with a multitude of miserable paupers, who are perishing for the want of food and clothing; and the city authorities should undertake to make *provisions* for their relief. And immediately, upon the completion of the arrangements, heralds should be sent in all directions to proclaim that the *provisions were now made*, fully to meet every case. The heralds cry aloud, “The corporation store is now open, and the provisions ample; whosoever will, let him come, and partake freely.” What would be the inference? And suppose, when the multitude begin to press to the place of supplies, they should find the doors shut and barred. And, lo! now they are told by one fully inducted into the secrets of the Common Council, The proclamation was correct enough, to be sure, but whoever supposed an announcement that provision is made for the supply of your necessities is the same as an assurance that

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, pp. 61, 62.

your wants will be *immediately* supplied upon your making application? Would the poor perishing creatures have no reason to complain of deception and imposition? Not at all, says Dr. Snodgrass, for the provisions will be made available in due time. On some future occasion, determined upon in secret council, just in time to save the people from finally perishing, the stores will be opened, and every want fully supplied. But, sir, where is the authority for this limitation? Is there anything of this kind in the proclamation? Were not the people invited to come *now*? This explanation mends not the matter at all. Under such circumstances a provision could not be announced, and left without any explanations with regard to a secret *determination* to delay the application of it in *good faith*, if such were the plan. The people should be told at the commencement not to expect their supplies *until a certain day*, when the stores would be open.

Dr. Woods has another way of disposing of the argument from the provisions of the gospel. It is as follows:—"Mr. Mahan thinks that his peculiar doctrine certainly follows from the fact, that provision is made for the entire sanctification of believers. This, then, shall be my next point of inquiry. *From the fact that provision is made in the gospel for the complete sanctification of believers, does it follow that they will be completely sanctified in the present life?* Let us dismiss all other points till we have disposed of this. It is a matter of reasoning. And those

who are accustomed to reasoning know how important it is to give a fixed attention to the point under consideration, and to be careful not to wander from it.”*

But the good doctor does Mr. Mahan great injustice in this argument. He certainly knew, for he could but know, that Mr. Mahan adduces the provisions of the gospel “for the complete sanctification of believers” to prove, not the *fact* that “they will be completely sanctified in this life,” but that “perfection in holiness is *attainable* in this life.”† The question of *fact* is not raised by Mr. Mahan at this point at all, and ought not to have been made the question by the doctor in the examination of his argument. Through all this whole chapter the venerable author totally misses the question, and perverts, instead of answering, the argument of his opponent. We argue, as does Mr. Mahan, that provision being made for the entire sanctification of believers affords ground to conclude that such a state *is attainable*.

3. I prove the attainableness of entire sanctification in the present life from the promises of the Bible. “And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.” Psa. cxxx, 8. “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you.—I will also save you from all your uncleannesses; and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and

* Examination of the Doctrine of Perfection, p. 22.

† See Mahan on Christian Perfection, p. 20.

lay no famine upon you." Ezek. xxxvi, 25, 29. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Deut. xxx, 6. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." Matt. v, 6. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John i, 7, 9. "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him." 1 John ii, 5.

Dr. Snodgrass concedes that "if there is a passage in the Bible which contains the promise of entire sanctification in this life, the whole controversy is thereby decided."* But he denies that any such promise is made. Upon the passages alledged he takes the following position:—

"In this view, the promises which they contain are 'exceeding great and precious;' they secure to every believer, beyond all peradventure or possibility of failure, a perfect deliverance from the existence and pollution of sin. But, as to *the time* at which this deliverance is to be consummated, they contain no specification, and express no opinion. They are just

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, p. 55.

as consistent with the views of those who suppose that sanctification is never entire in the present life, as with the views of those who believe that it is. Nor are there any promises in the Bible relating to this subject to which the same remark will not apply. There are many indeed which contemplate the perfect holiness of believers, but it is of believers *in common*, and without any limitation to this world as the time and place. The work is begun here, and carried on, under different circumstances, as well as with various degrees of rapidity. Ere long it will be completed; but, that any are to realize this completion, during the present life, is more than any promise of God has authorized us to expect.”*

And Dr. Woods takes the same view of these promises. Thus he proceeds: “To me it is manifest, that the above-mentioned promise may be accomplished in *different degrees*. It is accomplished in a lower degree, when God, by his Spirit, brings men to repent, and to render cordial obedience to his law *in a small measure*. It is accomplished in a *higher* degree when he brings them to render obedience *in a larger measure*. And it is accomplished in the highest degree, or perfectly, when he brings them to render an *unceasing* and *perfect* obedience. And this is only saying, what is true in a thousand cases, that a good work may be done, or a favor conferred, in different degrees, and that its being done in one degree does not necessa-

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, pp. 59, 60.

rily imply that it is done in another and higher degree. It would seem that no one can mistake concerning a matter so plain as this. And yet the conclusiveness of much of Mr. Mahan's reasoning turns upon this one point. Take the promise above recited, that *all shall know God, from the least to the greatest*. I ask Mr. Mahan whether this promise has ever been completely fulfilled, respecting either the children of Israel or any other nation? If he says yes, I ask, when? If he says no, as he doubtless will, then I ask, how, on this principle of interpreting the promises, he can vindicate the faithfulness of God? Will he say, although the promise has never yet been fulfilled, it will be *hereafter*? Then I ask, why the same may not hold in respect to all the texts in which God promises to make his people completely holy? If God may be faithful in respect to the promise that *all shall know him*, because he will fulfill it at a distant, future period, though for thousands of years it has remained unfulfilled, may he not be faithful in respect to his promise that *his people shall be made perfect in holiness*, if he fulfills it to them *a few days hence*—that is, when they are removed to the heavenly state—although it may not be fulfilled during the short period of the present life? ”*

Now the misfortune of all this reasoning is, that it goes upon the assumption that these promises are of the same nature of those which

* Examination of the Doctrine of Perfection, pp. 31-33.

relate to the *final* conversion of the world : this is the question in dispute, and remains to be proved. I go upon the presumption that all the promises made to believers, without any intimation that their application is not to be made now, during the present life, and when there is nothing in the nature of the case to postpone their fulfillment to the future state, are applicable at any time, and may be fulfilled at any moment.

The *onus probandi*, which our opponents would fain throw upon us, here properly devolves on them. It is not for us to prove that any promises made *without qualification* may be fulfilled now or during this life ; but it is for them to prove that in the nature of things, or according to the established principles of the divine government, their fulfillment is reserved for the life to come.

Is there anything unfair in this ? Suppose some one should attempt to sustain the position that men are not justified until after death, and should urge that the promises of justification will not fail if they are fulfilled ultimately : would not our learned doctors require such errorists to prove that the effects of faith in this case are removed to the future state ? Or would they take hold of the laboring oar themselves ? Do they not presume, in all other cases, that the provisions and promises of the gospel offered to believers, and not necessarily removed to the future state, are applicable now, and are at-

tainable in the present life? Doubtless they do. Only, then, let them be consistent, and they will yield the ground.

4. In the next place, I urge that a state of entire sanctification is made a matter of prayer.

Our Lord, in the form of prayer which he left for the instruction of the church, directs us to say, "Deliver us from evil." This petition is not restricted to physical evil, nor to a portion of moral evil, but is left to apply to sin in general, and of course embraces *all sin*. "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be *made perfect* in one." John xvii, 20-23. "I bow my knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he would grant you that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fullness of God." Eph. iii, 14, &c. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God, your whole spirit, soul, and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. v, 23. "Always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." Col. iv, 12.

Now I cannot doubt, (1.) But entire sancti-

fication is embraced in these prayers. Nor, (2.) That anything that we are authorized to pray for, either by precept or example, is attainable.

In relation to prayers for entire sanctification, Dr. Snodgrass says, "It is admitted, that all such prayers, if offered in sincerity, will be answered. But the question to be determined is, WHEN will they be answered?"* Well, let the doctor *prove*, by the testimony of Scripture, that they are not in any case to be answered *until after death*, and we will then yield up these passages, as giving us no support. Indeed, this will go far toward settling the whole controversy. And this we insist he is bound to do. These prayers are couched in the same language as all the prayers of the Scriptures which were expected to be answered in the present life, and it certainly devolves upon him to show the grounds of the difference which he makes between them. He wholly assumes, without proof, that these prayers are of the class that God "has *begun* to answer, but the set time to answer fully has not yet arrived."†

But not feeling quite satisfied with this method of disposing of one of these passages, (1 Thess. v, 23,) the doctor proceeds "to a critical examination of its meaning;" thus:—"It represents him as asking, not only that God would sanctify them wholly, but that their whole soul, body, and spirit might be *preserved*

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, p. 64.

† Ibidem, p. 66.

blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not to be doubted, that this language is capable of being so interpreted as to make it express his desire, that they might, in the first place, be *brought into* a state of perfect sanctification, and then *be kept in* that state until the coming of the Saviour to remove them at death.”*

Indeed, sir, “this language” is not only “*capable* of being so interpreted,” but this is its legitimate meaning. And it may be fairly doubted whether any one who had not a theory in his eye, independent of the sense of Scripture, would give the language any other construction.

Our author proceeds:—“But the difficulty attending this interpretation, to the advocate of perfection, is, that, if admitted to be true, it proves too much. In words immediately following the prayer, the apostle adds, ‘Faithful is he that calleth you, who also *will* do it.’ This was an absolute and unconditional promise, in which the faithfulness of God was pledged, in the most formal and solemn manner, for the bestowment of what the prayer contemplated upon all those on whose behalf it was offered. There could be no failure, in the case of any one of their number whom God had effectually called: so that, if sinless perfection in this world was the thing which the prayer contemplated, it follows that this perfection was attained by *all* the true followers of Christ in Thessalonica,—which is more than the advo-

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, p. 67.

cates of the doctrine themselves would be willing to admit.”*

We deny that the promise is “absolute and unconditional.” Let the eye run over the language which precedes the twenty-third verse, beginning with verse 16. Here we have, “Pray without ceasing—Quench not the Spirit—Hold fast that which is good—Abstain from all appearance of evil.” Are here no conditions? The words upon which our author bases his strong conclusion that the promise is “absolute and unconditional,” only prove that *God would certainly be faithful on his part*, and this we rejoice to believe as firmly as Dr. Snodgrass can.

But he says, “There could be no failure of any one of their number—so that if sinless perfection in this world was the thing which the prayer contemplated, it follows that this perfection was attained by all,” &c. No, sir. It only follows from the language of the passage that entire sanctification was *attainable* “by all the true followers of Christ in Thessalonica.” ‘This is all, and thus much is obvious enough.

Dr. Woods takes similar ground upon this point with Dr. Snodgrass, and an answer to one is an answer to both. There is, however, one view of the subject upon which Dr. Woods more strongly insists. “Prayer,” he says, “for any good plainly implies that the good is not already obtained. For, if obtained, why should it be prayed for?” And hence he concludes,

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, pp. 67, 68.

that it would be improper for any person in a state of entire sanctification still to pray for that good. There is no difficulty in this. We hold not to a state of sanctification in this life that admits of no growth, and renders the subject of it impeccable. He may ever pray for more and more of the image of God—of the love of God shed abroad in his heart—of all the graces of the Spirit—and for continued victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. He may, indeed he is bound to thank God for the degrees of sanctification he has received, but must never forget to ask for more.

5. Lastly. I assert instances of entire sanctification in proof of its attainableness.

If it can be proved from the Scriptures that there have been persons entirely sanctified, or perfectly holy, it will not be doubted but such a state is attainable. And I shall proceed in this investigation upon the principle that the words perfect, blameless, entire, and the like, are to be understood in their literal sense, unless the nature of the case is such as that a restricted meaning must be supposed. But where efforts have been made to prove that these terms are, in any of the instances cited, necessarily restricted, I shall give all the reasons of our opponents due consideration.

First. We may premise, that men of this class are recognized by the sacred writers as living upon earth. The Psalmist says, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, (תְּמִימֵי-דֶרֶךְ) *perfect of the way,*) who walk in the law of the

Lord." Psa. cxix, 1. Again he says, "He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me." Psa. ci, 6. And Solomon says, "'The upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it." Prov. ii, 21. Our Saviour says, "Blessed are the pure in heart,* for they shall see God." Matt. v, 8. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." 1 John iv, 17.

Secondly. There is a class of passages which speak of a state of entire sanctification as appropriate to the present state of being. The Psalmist says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," Psa. li, 10; and adds in the thirteenth verse, "Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." From this it seems evident that the Psalmist must have thought of living to do good in the world, after he should have "a clean heart and a right spirit."

And the prophet Ezekiel says in God's name, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," &c.; "And cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Ezek. xxxvi, 25-27.

Saint Peter represents our election to be

* *Professor Robinson* interprets οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, pure in heart; "*sincere, upright, void of evil.*" (See *Lexicon*.) And *Parkhurst*, "clean, pure, in a spiritual sense, from the pollution and guilt of sin." (See *Lexicon*.)

“through sanctification of the Spirit *unto obedience*,” 1 Pet. i, 2, “*εἰς ὑπακοήν* ; that is, in order that they should obey the gospel.”* In all these cases, and many others which might be quoted, sanctification is represented as a qualification for the great duties which are to be done in the present world, and, consequently, cannot be understood as only to be attained at death.

Thirdly. Particular instances may be alledged of persons who were said to be *perfect, blameless, upright, &c.* Enoch, Elijah, Daniel, and others, are represented, so far as I recollect, as free from sin—without offense before God ; and of Zachariah and Elisabeth it is said, that “they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the law blameless.” Luke i, 6.

How the greatest authorities with our opponents are obliged to shuffle and shift their positions in order to get along with these passages may be seen in the following specimen from Turretin :—

“If any are said in Scripture to have fulfilled the commandments of God, and to have loved God with the whole heart, and to have been perfect, as is said of Noah, (Gen. vi, 9,) of David, (Psa. cxix, 10,) of Josiah, (2 Kings xxiii, 25,) of Asa, (2 Chron. xv, 17,) of Zacharias and Elisabeth, (Luke i, 6,) and of others, this is to be understood not absolutely and with-

* Dr. Bloomfield. See Greek Testament, with English notes, *in loc.*

out limitation as a legal perfection¹ of love and obedience, both in degree and extent, as that would be inconsistent with the sins which are attributed to them.² But it is to be understood in a limited sense, as an evangelical perfection which indicates an obedience sincere and without hypocrisy,³ or in a comparative sense, both in respect to the wicked who are dead in sin, and in respect to those who are less holy.⁴ If Zacharias and Elisabeth are said to be righteous *ἐν ὧπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ* before God, this indicates, indeed, that their righteousness and piety were not clothed in false and hypocritical colors, such as could stand before men, but true and sincere, and approved themselves even to God.⁵ But it cannot be inferred from this that they were absolutely without spot, since, in the same place, mention is made of the unbelief of Zacharias.⁶ Nor is more to be understood when they are said to have walked in the commandments of God blameless, since this means only that they lived without blame and reproach

¹ We claim not for them, "absolutely and without limitation, a legal perfection."

² Sins are attributed to some of them at a different time from that in which they are pronounced perfect. This is nothing to the case.

³ Nearly right.

⁴ Rarely so. God has an invariable standard of holiness.

⁵ Mark this!

⁶ This "unbelief" occurred after it was said he was "righteous," &c. A righteous man may fall, either partially or wholly.

in the eyes of men.⁷ It is one thing to be absolutely sinless, but another to be blameless.⁸ Paul requires in a bishop that he should be irreprehensible, which is the same as to be blameless ; not that he should be without sin, which is impossible, but without blame and reproach."

This commentary is a very instructive one. While the ground for which we contend is really all conceded, the learned author, lest he should be found quite wide of the Augustinian theory, turns around, and makes explanations which amount to a flat contradiction of what he had before said.

Much pains is taken by our opponents to show that in several instances the most distinguished of the patriarchs fell into sins. Dr. Pond urges this fact against us thus :—"The imperfections of such men as Abram, and Lot, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and Aaron, and David, and Solomon, and Peter, and Barnabas, are all faithfully recorded by the pen of inspiration. Such men as Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Job, and Daniel, and Paul, and John, and James, we hear confessing, and oft bewailing and lamenting, their sins. In short, we read of no sinlessly-perfect man in the Bible, with the

⁷ How is this ? Just above our author gives *ενωπιον του Θεου*, *before God*, its true sense. "Their righteousness and piety," he says, "approved themselves even to God."

⁸ A good distinction. In the sense of this learned author we do not hold an "absolutely-sinless" state attainable in this life. But we believe a "blameless" state is attainable.

single exception of the man Christ Jesus. But if patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles—those holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost—were not perfect, where are we to look for perfection on this side the grave?"* Perhaps, indeed, nowhere after the good doctor's fashion!

It is easy to deal in wholesale assertions, and to generalize upon any topic; but to go into particulars, and sustain general conclusions by particular facts, is not always so easy a task. It would be hard for our author to sustain a charge of moral delinquency against at least some of the characters he has mentioned. And besides, the sins they committed, and confessed, and mourned over, are nothing to the question of the *attainableness* of a state of perfection. If an instance can be found in the Bible of one individual who, at any period of his life, is truly said to be perfect, blameless, upright, free from sin, or entirely sanctified, the point is clearly gained. It proves the attainableness of such a state. The previous sins or subsequent relapses of such make not in the least against our theory, for we believe not, as I have said repeatedly, in a state of perfection which implies impeccability, or certain perseverance in that state to the last.

We doubt not, indeed, but the same grace which could preserve the soul of a Christian unblamable in love for one moment could do the same for an hour, a day, a year, and through

* Biblical Repository, vol. i, pp 50, 51.

a long life. But this grace will not be vouchsafed to the unwatchful, or the negligent. A holy man may lose his vigilance, and so leave room for the entrance of temptations, and, through their influence, fall away from God. But would this prove that he was never holy? I think not. I could give illustrations, but they are scarcely necessary.

St. Paul has been adduced as an instance of Christian perfection. But our opponents will not award to the great apostle the purity claimed for him. They alledge his own declarations to the contrary. I will now proceed to inquire how far these go to prove that Paul was really an *imperfect* Christian—destitute, at least, of some of the great elements of Christian character which he urges upon others. I will give the argument of Dr. Snodgrass at length, that it may have its full force.

“In the third chapter of his Epistle to the Philippians, the apostle gives the most extended and minute account of himself, which his writings contain, as to the *progress* which he had made in his Christian course. He introduces himself to the notice of his readers as having started in a ‘*race*,’ and as pressing on toward the goal, with a view of securing the prize. He supposes the same circumstances to be present which distinguished the natural race as run at the celebration of the ancient games. He supposes his *course* to be marked out and prescribed in the gospel: he regards Jesus Christ as having ‘*apprehended*,’ or laid hold on

him, to draw him into this course, and to support and urge him forward in the contest: he has his eye fixed on *a mark*, which he calls 'the mark *for* the prize'—a goal which he must reach before the prize could be awarded: and, in connection with the mark, is the *prize* itself—the crown of life—the incorruptible crown, which every winner in this race will receive, as the reward of his victory. I need not occupy the time of the reader in showing that 'the mark' for this prize is perfection in holiness; because this is the only mark, or termination of his course, to which the Christian is allowed to have respect. This is the only goal to which he is commanded to run—the only point at which he is permitted to stop—the only line beyond which there is nothing more to be acquired or done. As a Christian, there is nothing *else* which he is bound to do, than to seek and obtain a state of entire conformity to the image and will of God, both in heart and in life. Having arrived at this state, his work is finished—he can run no further—his obligations are all discharged—he has come up to the mark, and is ready for the prize."*

It will be perceived that the whole force of this argument depends upon the construction Dr. S. gives "the mark" at which the apostle was pressing. Now, if he be allowed to assume that this *mark* is that "perfection in holiness" which we contend is attainable in this life, and which we think St. Paul had already

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, pp. 37-39.

attained, he most certainly derives strong support from the passage under consideration. But he has no right to this assumption. Confident as he is that "this is the only goal to which he is commanded to run," I beg leave to show that there is no evidence of it whatever.

In the first place, there is no conclusive evidence that the σκοπον, *mark*, refers to the *goal* at all.

The learned Peirce says :—"κατα σκοπον, *toward the mark.*"] I have not met with any good authorities to prove that σκοπος signifies the same as τερμα, a *goal*; and therefore I choose rather to take it in the sense in which it is commonly read, and so render it *according to my aim or design*. Nor is it necessary in allegories to be always confined to terms."*

And Dr. Clarke renders κατα σκοπον διωκω, *I pursue along the line*: and adds this note:—"This is a reference to the *white line* that marked the ground in the stadium, from the *starting* place to the *goal*, on which the runners were obliged to keep their eye fixed: for they who transgressed, or *went beyond* this line, did not *run lawfully*, and were not crowned, even though they got *first* to the goal."†

The preposition κατα, in the common version rendered *toward*, followed by an accusative, as in the text, often signifies *according to, conformably to, after, along, all along*. See Matt. ix, 29; xxii, 3; Luke ii, 20; John viii, 15; Acts

* Paraphrase and Notes on the place.

† Commentary on the place.

v, 15 ; Rom. xi, 2.* So that a literal rendering of *κατα σκοπον διωκω επι το βραβειον*, is, *I follow on toward the prize, along, or conformably to the mark.*

But if it be admitted that by *σκοπον*, *mark*, the apostle means the *goal*, still it is a question what attainments are to be considered as implied in *the goal*. The Westminster divines consider this goal and the prize as identical. Their language is : “ ‘ *The mark* ’—The prize of heavenly glory, for which we run in the holy race set before us. 1 Cor. ix, 24, &c.” So far, then, the evidence of the passage in question affords no help to the cause of Dr. Snodgrass. But let us hear him further :—

“ Let it now be considered, that, when this memorable passage was written, the apostle had been running the race, which he describes, for a period of something like *thirty* years. He was not far from the point, at which he afterward said, ‘ I have *finished* my course.’ In about *three* years more he was to reach the goal, and obtain the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, had promised to give him. And, under these circumstances, what does he say concerning his progress ? ‘ Not as though I had *already attained*, either were *already perfect* : but I *follow after* ’—‘ Brethren, I count not myself *to have apprehended* ; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press

* See Robinson’s and Parkhurst’s Lexicons.

toward the mark.' As if he had said, 'After all the progress I have made in the divine life, there are other and still higher attainments before me—I pretend not to have reached the point at which I am aiming, but only to be *approaching* it—all that I can claim is, that, instead of being satisfied with past efforts, I am intent upon still higher degrees of proficiency and success.' ”*

It is sufficiently evident that the apostle uses the word perfect here with reference to the crown of martyrdom, or perhaps the resurrection state. (See verses 9–11.) Diodati paraphrases the passage thus: “Let no man believe that I am as a divine man or an angel in the world, and that I am arrived to the end of my race and combats.”

Dr. Clarke paraphrases ἡδὴ τετελειωμαι, *nor am I yet perfect*, “I am not yet crowned in consequence of having suffered martyrdom;” and proceeds: “I am quite satisfied that the apostle here alludes to the Olympic games; and the word τετελειωμαι is the proof; for τελειωθηναι is spoken of those who have completed their race, reached the goal, and are honored with the prize.” This he proves from Philo. Then he shows by examples from Clemens Alexandrinus, Basil, Œcumenius, and Eusebius, that “τελειωσις signified martyrdom.” In conclusion, this learned commentator says:

“St. Paul, therefore, is not speaking here of any *deficiency* in his own grace or spiritual

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, pp. 39, 40.

state ; he does not mean by not being yet *perfect*, that he had *a body of sin and death* cleaving to him, and was still polluted with *indwelling sin*, as some have most falsely and dangerously imagined : he speaks of his not having terminated his course by martyrdom, which he knew would, sooner or later, be the case. This he considered as the *τελειωσις*, or *perfection* of his whole career ; and was led to view everything as *imperfect* or unfinished till this had taken place."

That this passage was not designed to be considered as denying the fact of the perfection of Paul's Christian character is plain from what he says in verse 15, "Let us, therefore, as many of us as *be perfect*, be thus minded." Here he explicitly lays claim to perfection.

St. Augustine gives us a clear and consistent view of the apostle's use of the word perfection in these two places, thus, "Perfecti et non perfecti : perfecti viatores nondum perfecti possessores—*Perfect and not perfect : perfect travelers, but not perfect possessors.*"*

Now what we contend for is, that St. Paul was a *perfect traveler*, and that we all may be in this respect like him. A *perfect possessor* he was not, but hoped to be such in due time. If all that this father says upon perfection were equally luminous, it would probably have been much better for the church.

Another argument to prove that St. Paul was not entirely sanctified, Dr. Snodgrass founds

* Sermo. 169.

upon Heb. xii, 1. He proceeds thus: "He [Paul] unites with the Hebrews in saying, 'Let us lay aside every weight, and *the sin* which doth so easily beset us'—regarding himself, in common with them, as exposed to the influence of besetting sins."*

This is an argument of no force. We have seen, on a similar occasion, that nothing can be concluded from the use of the pronoun in the first person plural, as this form is commonly used by writers and speakers, when the speaker is not to be understood as included. *Ενπεριστάτον ἁμαρτίαν* is rendered by the best critics, *the well-circumstanced sin*, and may be supposed to refer to the sin to which the Hebrews were most exposed.†

Professor Stuart says, "The *ἁμαρτία* [*sin*] which most easily beset the Hebrews, was undoubtedly *apostasy*, or defection from their Christian profession; against which the whole epistle is directed. They were under peculiar temptations to this sin, in consequence of the persecutions which they endured, and of their former prejudices in favor of Judaism."‡

And will Dr. Snodgrass say that these Hebrew Christians, and St. Paul with them, *apostatized* daily? It can scarcely be a good cause that depends upon such arguments as this.

Dr. S. proceeds: "He records, in his Second

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, p. 40.

† See Clarke's Commentary on the place, and Bretschneider's Lexicon on the word.

‡ Commentary, *in loc.*

Letter to the Corinthians, that his tendency to spiritual pride was such, that there was given to him ‘a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him.’”* Dr. S. does not precisely follow the old error, that “the thorn in the flesh” was “concupiscence.” But whatever it was, it was designed to cure in Paul a tendency to spiritual pride; or if not exactly to *cure* the evil, as it could not, according to Dr. S., be *wholly* cured until death, yet to punish him for it, or perhaps to *keep it down* a little.

Calvin says upon this passage: “Here we see a man who had conquered infinite dangers, torments, and other evils; had triumphed over all the enemies of Christ, and had shaken off the fear of death, and renounced the world; yet had not wholly subdued his propensity to *pride*. Nay, he was still engaged in so dreadful a conflict with it, that he could not conquer without himself being beaten and buffeted.”

All this is mere assumption. There is no proof in this text, or any other, that Paul “had not wholly subdued his *propensity to pride*.” ‘*ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραιρωμαι*, *Lest I should be exalted above measure*, or, which is more literal, *that I might not be over exalted*, by no means proves that there was still remaining in him a *sinful propensity* to spiritual pride. All that the passage proves, is, that he was *liable* to be too much elevated, and to prevent it, God permitted him to suffer some severe affliction. And who knows that the preventive was not effectual?

* Scripture Doctrine, p. 40.

If Dr. S. does, he will do us a favor by informing us where he received his information.

But let us hear the final accusation brought by the good doctor against the great apostle :—
“And who can believe that the sharp contention between him and Barnabas would ever have occurred, if his mind and affections had been in a state of entire sanctification ?”*

As to this, Dr. S. must give me some further light before I can conclude with any safety that this “sharp contention” affords any evidence that St. Paul’s “mind and affections” had not “been in a state of entire sanctification.” I must know either that Paul had the wrong side in the quarrel, and that he took this side against good reason, or that he prosecuted the controversy in an unchristian spirit. All *contention* is not *sin*. But I need not enlarge.

Was ever an argument put forth by a Christian divine more slenderly sustained than the whole of this of Dr. S., to prove that St. Paul had within him unsanctified affections? We are bound to criminate no one without evidence which excludes reasonable doubt, and certainly we should not fasten upon the holy apostle the charge of *sin* without the clearest evidence. And what evidence has been adduced? Passages are brought forward, which, rightly construed, imply no moral defect in the apostle; but which will not admit of the construction put upon them by Dr. S. without violence to all correct rules of interpretation. He often de-

* Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification, p. 41.

pend upon the mere sound of a word without any reference to the connection, much less to the original. If this is the true mode of discussing any disputed point, I am yet totally uninstructed upon the subject.

It is, however, but fair to state that Dr. S. makes his principal dependence upon the *seventh chapter of Romans*. As I have already fully discussed this chapter, and shown, I trust, that the apostle is not there speaking of his own spiritual state after his conversion, I need say no more upon that subject.

Let us now see if there is no good reason, on the other hand, for believing that Paul was, in the sense in which that character is spoken of in the Scriptures, a *perfect Christian*. We will take the apostle's own representations of himself, for certainly he would make no false professions. Says he, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Gal. ii, 20. "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe." 1 Thess. ii, 10.

Again, let it be observed that the apostle sets himself up for an example to others without any reserve. He says, "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you." Phil. iv, 9. "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so

as ye have us for an ensample." Phil. iii, 17. "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." 1 Cor. xi, 1.

Now need any further evidence be sought to prove our point? Could the apostle use such language as this if he were capitally deficient in any of the attributes of a perfect Christian? And should any in these times employ the same language in relation to their own religious character and experience, how long would it be ere they would be branded as *perfectionists* by such divines as Drs. Snodgrass and Woods, and declared by the Princeton and Christian Reviews mad enthusiasts?

If, then, St. Paul has spoken truly concerning himself, he was "crucified with Christ"—lived "holily, and justly, and unblamably"—was "perfect"—and so *followed Christ*, that he could safely admonish all to *follow him* in like manner. This is a clear development of Christian perfection. And I suppose our opponents will not pretend to dispute our conclusion, provided we can maintain our premises. That is, if we can prove that Paul was an instance of the perfection we contend for, we may conclude the state attainable. The conclusion follows so obviously from the premises, that those who oppose the doctrine of Christian perfection direct their efforts altogether to the refutation of the premises. They undertake to show that St. Paul was not a perfect Christian. With what success they have prosecuted their argument we have seen. I now leave the whole

which has been presented, *pro* and *con*, for the candid to examine and decide upon, according to their honest convictions. I have endeavored to present the whole argument in as clear a light as possible, and hope I have not been guilty of using needless severity in my reflections upon views and arguments which I have judged it necessary to oppose.

Here I leave the controversial part of this discussion, and proceed to the more agreeable work of presenting its experimental and practical parts.

LECTURE X.

THE WAY TO THE ATTAINMENT OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

“Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” John xi, 40.

THE subject of Christian perfection is eminently a practical one. It has much to do with the heart and the life. And if I have succeeded in the preceding lectures in obviating the objections which are brought against this doctrine, and in adducing clear and conclusive Scripture proof of its truth, still but a part of my object is accomplished. It yet remains more particularly to point out the way and the means of its attainment, and to urge the motives for immediate action. We have done but little

when we have merely admitted that Christian perfection is a speculative or doctrinal truth. The next, and by far the most difficult matter, is to feel a *personal interest* in the truth:—to realize *what it is to us*:—to feel that it infinitely concerns *ourselves*. To bring the subject home, then—to labor to produce conviction of the present need we all stand in of *entire sanctification*—and give appropriate directions to such as feel this conviction, shall now be my leading object.

The purpose of the present lecture shall be to show by what means the grace of entire sanctification may be attained.

I may presume here, *first*, that it has been sufficiently proved that God has provided for the entire sanctification of his people in the present life. And, *secondly*, if so, that we are all personally and individually interested in this provision. If we credit these propositions, and are at the same time conscious that this great work has never been effected in our hearts, can we but feel solemn conviction of our need of it—of the importance of employing such efforts as are the appointed and appropriate means of its attainment? It is for the special benefit of such as have this conviction that I shall now proceed to consider the steps to be taken in order to the attainment of that triumph over sin, and that complete renovation of the soul, implied in Christian perfection.

1. Endeavor to have a definite idea of the thing.

What we see indistinctly we are likely to feel little personal interest in, and to seek waveringly. How much effort is lost for the want of a definite point! This is true in everything. The worldling fixes his eye upon wealth in general, and the politician upon the triumph of his party, or his own aggrandizement. But those who succeed in either of these departments of action do not content themselves with the general object. They fix their eye upon some distinct point, as involving the general object, and absolutely essential to it. To this they direct their energies, never losing sight of it for a moment. All they do, directly or indirectly, bears upon this one point. This is one grand secret of success. The man who aims at nothing in particular, however strongly he may feel impressed with the importance of some general object, will never accomplish much. His efforts will be various, hesitating, and often conflicting. He will spend his life in fruitless toil, and live and die under the influence of sad disappointment and chagrin.

What, then, is the definite object, in relation to the subject under consideration, upon which the attention must be fixed? The object is *entire sanctification*. This, as we have seen, consists in *the destruction of sin, and the renewing of the soul in the image of God*. Now of this we must have a distinct view. We must be able, in our conceptions, to separate it from everything not necessarily or immediately connected with it. We must view it as distinct

from simple justification and regeneration on the one hand, and from the resurrection and the glorified state upon the other. If we confound entire sanctification with simple regeneration, or if we give them an immediate connection, so that the latter cannot exist without the former, the evidence of regeneration will obviate the necessity, and indeed preclude the possibility, of special efforts in pursuit of this entire sanctification. And on the other hand, it will be impossible for us to make rational efforts to attain now what we in our conceptions connect with the state of the glorified. Let us then fix our eye upon this one point—*the reduction of the whole man to the government and guidance of the divine will.*

But it must not be supposed that the *nature* of this work, its evidences, and the manner of its accomplishment, can be fully understood before it is experienced. Too many are waiting to know *how these things can be*, before they make a serious effort to obtain the blessing. As in the lower stages of Christian experience, so in this—we must take many things upon trust; we must “walk by faith, not by sight.” And if we must know the whole way with the clearness of intuition, or of present consciousness, before we will take a step, God will doubtless leave us in our present ignorance with regard to the whole matter. If I wish to visit a distant point concerning which I know nothing excepting from the report of travelers, it would be an extravagant demand for me to require per-

fect information with regard to all the various appearances of the way, and all the fortunes of the journey, before I would venture to set off. It would be quite enough for me to have satisfactory evidence that the desired point was accessible—that the way was feasible—and that the exercise of my natural powers of body and mind would in due time probably bring me there. With this evidence before me, would it be rational for me to sit still and speculate upon circumstances which I can never fully understand until they come under my own observation? If I should pursue this course, when some important interest would be put in jeopardy by every moment's delay—if I must reach the place by a certain time, or fail to discharge some great moral or social obligation, or lose some great advantage—if I must execute a commission, or prove my title to an estate, by a time so near that my utmost diligence will be barely sufficient to meet, what folly and recklessness would there be in my wasting time in idle and fruitless speculations! The illustration is of easy application. We are told that we must be holy—sanctified wholly—and that there is a way to this desired point which is practicable and safe; that many have traveled it, and have sent back a good report concerning the goodly land and the way to it; and we are assured that, if we take the right course and press on, we shall certainly reach the goal. Now what more need we desire? Does not our asking more, and our delaying under such cir-

cumstances, prove but too clearly that we do not sufficiently appreciate the object, or that we have an aversion to the way?

There is a difference, then, between a clear and definite notion of the object in view, and a comprehensive and circumstantial knowledge of the object with all its adjuncts, antecedents, and consequents. The former we must have—the latter we have no reason to expect, and shall seek for in vain.

2. A certain amount of *feeling* upon the subject is necessary.

The excitement that is required is represented by the sensations of *hunger* and *thirst*. Our Saviour says, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Our efforts in the pursuit of an attainable object are in proportion to the strength of our desires. If our desires are strong and constant, we pursue the object with undeviating and constant exertion; but as our feelings fluctuate, our efforts are generally unsteady. Indeed, to be properly awake upon the great subject under consideration is to overcome the greatest part of the difficulties which beset the way. The *anxious* mind is wise to devise, and prompt to execute; but the unfeeling heart sees a thousand difficulties where there is none, and, like a pool in a dead calm, remains motionless. Apathy is the greatest obstacle to the pursuit of holiness—it is worse, if possible, than a spirit of fixed opposition: for resistance often recoils upon the excited sensibilities, and produces a

reaction of the feelings ; but insensibility remains the same—holding the soul spell-bound in the adamant chain of a deceptive security.

And is there not a dreadful amount of apathy in the church upon the subject of entire sanctification ? Let us look round upon our own branch of the church, and make observation. We hold to the attainableness of this high state of grace ; but, how large a proportion of us are anxiously seeking after it ? We believe it, prove it, contend earnestly for it, but, alas ! how many of us have attained it, or are restlessly pursuing it ? Where is the evidence that we are “hungering and thirsting after righteousness”—that we “expect to be made perfect in love in this life,” and that we are “groaning after it ?” This is an absorbing inquiry, and the result to which it brings us is alarming. If God says, “Wo to them that are at ease in Zion !” on what ground do many of us bless ourselves in our imaginary security, or fancy that we are really safe, merely because we have no troublesome anxieties about our own souls, or the souls of others ? “Come up, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live !”

Some may be disposed to query here, how we are to obtain the tide of feeling which will push itself out into appropriate exertions in pursuit of the desired good. “With God is the residue of the Spirit,” and the necessary excitement is the product of the Spirit, giving effect to the word. Who, then, it is sometimes objected, is to blame for not having the anxious

desire for holiness, which the Spirit of God alone can beget in the soul?

In answer to this, I would say, that I assume here that God is not backward in doing his part in this matter. A careful analysis of our mental states and their causes will show that our want of sensibility is the result of violence done both to former emotions and to the present influences of the Spirit of God. We do not feel, because we have been unwilling to feel. God has often aroused us from our slumbers, but we have listened to the syren voice of the tempter, and sunk down again into our wonted repose. But admitting all this, say you, how shall I once more feel the inward drawings of the Spirit—the softening influences of truth—the meltings of a broken heart? The answer is ready: Remove from your imagination the phantom that you have already entered the port of peace—let the world dazzle you no more—uncase your soul, and let the light and heat of evangelical truth fall upon its tender fibres—and finally, cry mightily to God for deliverance from the arms of your spiritual Delilah before you go bound hand and foot into the hands of Philistines, to grind at their mill, and to be to them an object of derision. Until you shall have done at least as much as this, it is vain, and worse than vain, to ask why it is that God has left you in this state of apathy and insensibility. The reason is plain:—you have invited counter-excitements—you have grieved the Holy Spirit—you have armed yourselves

against his influences. Where is the mystery, then, in your present spiritual condition—in your state of insensibility and apparent incapability of being properly stimulated by the great motives of the gospel? But remove the cause, and in the mercy of God the effect will cease. God yet waits to be gracious—his hand is stretched out still—and he is as ready as ever to soften, draw, and mold, the submissive and yielding heart. I must, however, hasten to another particular.

3. We must exercise feelings of contrition.

A deep and permanent godly sorrow must take possession of our hearts. This feeling will arise from a conviction of hidden corruptions and inward unlikeness to God—will consist in a perfect self-abhorrence and self-renunciation. If we have not wickedly departed from God, or backslidden in heart, it will not imply condemnation or a sense of guilt. It is a feeling which is entirely consistent with a sense of the divine favor, or the evidence of pardon. It is a self-loathing, arising from clear views of the holiness of God, and the deep taint of human depravity. The experience of Job furnishes a fine illustration of the repentance of a justified person who seeks a clean heart. Before God, by a mysterious chain of providences and the revelation of himself, had led him to a full view of the hidden corruptions of his nature, he justified himself. But what were his subsequent views? Saith he, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine

eye seeth thee ; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent as in dust and ashes." His former views of God had been comparatively obscure, and he had thought proportionably well of himself. But a clear revelation of the holiness of the divine character brought him into the dust. We know not that even now he accuses himself of flagrant iniquity, but still he sees occasion for infinite self-abhorrence, and the most profound repentance. As says the poet :—

" I loathe myself when God I see,
And into nothing fall."

It is true that this repentance can only be originated in the soul by the Spirit of God. But it is equally true, that its exercise is dependent upon volition, and hence it is a human duty as well as a divine grace. A sinner may feel remorse without his consent and against his will, but true godly sorrow is a voluntary state of the mind. It is the result of consent given to the claims of our rightful Sovereign—the fruit of cherished convictions. The damned in hell will doubtless feel eternal remorse, but their dark bosoms will never be the seat of a single emotion of true godly sorrow.

In seeking entire sanctification, we must pry into the secrets of our inmost souls. We must be willing, yea, desirous, to know the very worst of our case. The great deep of our hearts—all their hidden recesses—must be matters of toilsome scrutiny, and of painful solicitude. Our prayer must be like that of David, " Search me,

O God, and know my heart," &c. And upon a full discovery of our real vileness, we shall lose sight of all the good we have ever done. We shall fall into our native nothingness. We shall hide our face in the dust—proclaim our sinfulness—and, losing all confidence in the flesh, we shall look about for some other sanctuary than our own righteousness.

When Isaiah "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple;" then he saw his own vileness, and was led to exclaim, "Wo is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips." Isa. vi, 1, 5. When we seek for that true godly sorrow for our inward corruptions of which I am speaking, we should pray for a revelation to the eye of our faith of the glories and majesty of the divine character. We should study that character—we should turn our eyes from all besides, until, "by beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The states of mind which I have brought to view will prepare the way for another, which occupies the highest place in the estimate, and without which all that we have previously noticed and urged will be of no consequence whatever.

4. The grand condition upon which our entire sanctification is suspended, and which must be met and discharged, is *faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*.

We are sanctified as well as justified by faith, and in both instances faith is the same in nature. It has respect to the doctrines and facts, to the precepts and to the promises, of the gospel. In relation to the doctrines and facts it is *credence*, in relation to the precepts *assent*, and in relation to the promises *confidence*. This great difference between the faith which justifies and that which sanctifies wholly, is, that the former contemplates simple pardon, or the canceling of guilt; while the latter respects the destruction of inward sin, and the entire restoration of the divine image.

I need not here discuss the subject of faith in general. It is very important, however, that the peculiarities of sanctifying faith should be well understood. For the want of this many stumble at the threshold, and do not come into the possession of the blessing they earnestly desire.

First, then, this faith implies a perception of the sufficiency of the provisions of the gospel for the complete deliverance of the soul from sin, and of the special promise made of the accomplishment of the work for all that believe.

I scarcely need urge that we shall not—that we cannot—rationally seek what we do not see provided and promised in the gospel. This may be assumed as a matter of course. The fact that some may have obtained *perfect love* without a distinct faith in the doctrine of Christian perfection as we hold it, is not in the least against my position. In all such the subject

must have seen this high attainment provided and promised in the gospel, and must have sought it, though the *name* or the *definition* we employ may never have been used. Names are not always essential to things. And though we would adhere to Scriptural names, and must continue to believe this the safest and best way to preserve the identity of the things which they are used to signify, yet we doubt not but in numerous instances the things themselves are enjoyed and realized where, through the influence of unfortunate prejudices, the appropriate names are discarded.

We must then see the provision made for our entire sanctification, and that God has explicitly promised this blessing. I have before discussed those passages where these provisions and promises are found, and need not here refer to them again. It is not difficult to gain assent to the general fact that there are such provisions and promises. The grand difficulty is in bringing the matter home to ourselves. This brings us to another point.

Secondly. We must feel an inward confidence that these provisions are made for *us*.

I can much more easily believe that "exceeding great and precious promises" are made to the church in general, or the believing in general, than I can that they are made to *me*—to my *unworthy, wretched* SELF. But the faith that brings the blessing of perfect love must so far honor the riches of divine grace as to regard the provision made for *me*, and made as truly

for *me* as though there had not been another in the whole universe to need such provision.

As Wesleyan Methodists we all believe in the amplitude of the gospel provisions. We believe that the blood of Christ can even *now* cleanse the soul from *all sin*. We contend for the truth of the doctrine, and rejoice to hear those who have experienced its power make profession of the great things God has done for them. But ah! to come home to ourselves, how few of us, comparatively, feel a personal interest in this great subject! How many, after all, seem to doubt whether it is indeed possible for them to attain to a state of entire sanctification! We must, however, come to this. A general faith, indeed, has its use—it saves us from infidelity and universal skepticism; but it will not bring us into possession of the provisions of the gospel. “Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.” Come thou thyself near to the throne of the heavenly grace. Do not throw the whole world, nor the whole church, between thee and thy God; but approach him with boldness—with humble confidence. Come into the King’s presence, and be assured he will reach thee the golden sceptre, and thou shalt find favor and honor from him, whom thou hast too long grieved with thy slowness of heart to believe all that he hath spoken. But there is still a more difficult point to be gained before this faith is complete.

Thirdly. We must believe that this blessing is for us *now*.

The faith that the blessing may be had some time or another—at some future indefinite period—will not prevail. It must contemplate the provision as within our reach—as *now* at hand. It will not admit of delay—it knows no inconvenient season. It says, surely, “Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” Its language is, “Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is *nigh thee*, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Rom. x, 6–9.

Here it should be remarked, 1. That the faith spoken of is *believing with the heart*. And 2. It brings the blessing near, right home, and appropriates it. It does not contemplate the great salvation as so high or so profound, or so far away, that a long journey, or a difficult or doubtful process, is to intervene before the object can be gained. No: glory, and honor, and praise, to God and the Lamb, for ever and ever, “the word of faith is *nigh thee*—even in thy mouth and in thy heart!” Amen! so let it be! “Even so; come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.”

This, I say, is the most difficult point of all to gain. Often the enemy entrenches himself here, and prepares for the grand encounter. At

all points previously he had been forced to yield. The seeker after entire sanctification is enabled to believe such a blessing provided, and provided even for him ; but the question is, *when* may he come into possession of it ? The enemy suggests, *not quite yet*—you are too unworthy—you are not yet prepared for it—you must feel more deeply the need of it—you must mourn and pray longer—you must wait patiently—circumstances are unfavorable—you must gather around you more helps—you must go somewhere, or do some great thing, before God will visit you with the great salvation. Now, if we stop and hesitate upon any of these points, hell triumphs, and we go out again to sea. But here is the very point where we are to honor God and confound the devil by believing—by crediting all God's promises. Hear the Saviour now crying out, “ Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ? ” And while he *marvels* at our *unbelief*, how is it that we *fear to believe* ? That we, in our blindness, consider it *presumptuous* to credit the word of our great High Priest ? O, why not leave our fruitless toiling, and calmly and confidently resign our cause to the Captain of our salvation ?

Mr. Fletcher gives us the following beautiful illustration of the point I am urging :—

“ Believers generally go on to Christian perfection as the disciples went to the other side of the sea of Galilee. They toiled some time very hard, and with little success ; but after they

had 'rowed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs, they saw Jesus walking on the sea. He said to them, It is I, be not afraid; then they willingly received him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.' Just so, we toil till our faith discovers Christ in the promise, and welcomes him into our hearts; and such is the effect of his presence, that immediately we arrive at the land of perfection. Or, to use another illustration, God says to believers, 'Go to the Canaan of perfect love; arise, why do ye tarry? Wash away the remains of sin, calling, that is, believing, on the name of the Lord.' And if they submit to the obedience of faith, he deals with them as he did with the evangelist Philip, to whom he had said, 'Arise, and go toward the south.' For when they 'arise and run,' as Philip did, the Spirit of the Lord takes them, as he did the evangelist; and they are found in the New Jerusalem, as 'Philip was found at Azotus.' They 'dwell in God,' or in perfect love, 'and God,' or perfect love, dwells 'in them.' "

5. I would urge the necessity of attendance upon all the means of grace.

We have seen that the only condition, strictly so called, upon which entire sanctification is suspended, is *faith*. But this faith must be associated with certain states of mind and courses of action. It cannot subsist alone. The states of mind which precede and accompany this

faith I have already noticed. I shall now proceed to speak of the course of conduct necessary to be pursued.

It will be scarcely necessary to urge that he who would seek for entire conformity to the will of God must forsake all evil courses. The means of grace cannot be acceptably performed while we indulge in known sin. The Psalmist says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Forsaking every crooked way, and turning our back upon the vain pomp and glory of the world, we must betake ourselves to all the great duties of piety, charity, and mortification prescribed in the gospel. Here I need not go extensively into particulars. Some few of the duties which are of special importance, and which imply the rest, I shall proceed to notice.

Reading devotionally the Holy Scriptures,—communicating at the Lord's table,—hearing the word preached,—fasting or abstinence,—and prayer, will be found not only serviceable but imperatively necessary. We call these *means of grace*—not because they, of themselves, infallibly secure the grace of God, but because they are outward duties, to the right performance of which God promises his blessing. Any negligence in these duties exposes a wrong state of the moral feelings, and the absence of the essential conditions upon which God suspends the gift of the Holy Spirit. But we must guard against making any of these means either *grace itself* or the *cause of grace*.

Sanctifying grace is a spiritual and invisible influence, which proceeds from the infinite fullness of divine love. We can do nothing to deserve it. All we can do is to seek it in God's appointed way, and then receive it as a mere gratuity, feeling that "after we have done all, we are unprofitable servants—we have done nothing more than was our duty to do."

After these general remarks it may not be unnecessary to give a more particular view of one leading duty—I refer to *prayer*. Prayer is the soul's converse with God—and God has seen proper to require it of all. None will doubt but God might have instituted some other plan or mode of intercourse between man and his Maker. None will doubt but he might have so arranged the conditions of his kingdom that men might receive gracious and saving influences without asking for them, had he seen this best. But the fact that he has instituted prayer as the way or means of access to the throne of grace is abundantly asserted in the Scriptures, and exhibits no incongruity with any of the various developments of wisdom and goodness with which we are acquainted in the divine arrangements. And such an arrangement seems an eminent exhibition of wisdom and goodness. What better could our heavenly Father have done for us than to have said, "Ask, and ye shall receive." Poor, and unworthy, and wretched as we are, we can "ask." It is the province of *paupers* to *beg*—they can *ask* and *receive*, though they have nothing to *pay*.

The faith of which I have spoken has special reference to Christ. It submits to his governance, rests upon his atonement, and trusts his promises. Prayer for entire sanctification principally contemplates the agency of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit is the grand efficient agent in the great work of renewing the soul in the image of God. And for the aid of the Holy Spirit we are instructed to pray. It was when the disciples were all with one accord in one place, lifting up their hearts in prayer, that the Holy Ghost fell upon them, on the day of Pentecost. And our Saviour says, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

For this baptism of the Spirit we must pray in secret. Retiring from the world—shutting out its cares—we must pour forth a torrent of ardent supplications. Our soul's desires, like the smoking incense, must ascend to the very heavens, and, curling around the divine throne, present a sweet savor to the Eternal. O how heaven-like is the closet! How sacred the place where man is in audience with the Deity! Here let the thirsty soul breathe out the unutterable prayer. Though thoughts too big for expression may labor in the recesses of the soul, there is a consciousness that "God knows them all together." Though the anguish of the spirit is too terrible for endurance, here the soul's best Friend eminently resides, and in the

fullness of his compassion says to the weary and heavy-laden, *Roll your burdens on me.* "Cast thy burdens on the Lord, and he will sustain thee." Though your sins are as mountains, he will annihilate them with a word. "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee." Though your corruptions, like a swelling tide, threaten to bear you away to the gulf of eternal ruin, his infinite love will dry up the vast abyss. For he promises to "purge away our sins till there be none of them." And though misery and grief shall be ready to swallow you up, he will give you comfort. "For, behold," saith he, "I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and my people a joy." Here, then, I say, in your closet go to God in prayer, and plead his promises and your own wretchedness and wants, and God will meet you there, for he has said he would. He has promised, and he will perform.

Social prayer will be found especially beneficial. The pious vicar of Madeley especially recommends this.

"Social prayer is closely connected with faith in the capital promise of the sanctifying Spirit; and therefore I earnestly recommend that mean of grace, where it can be had, as being eminently conducive to the attaining of Christian perfection. When many believing hearts are lifted up, and wrestle with God in prayer together, you may compare them to many diligent hands which work a large machine. At such times, particularly, the fountains of the great deep are broken up, the win-

dows of heaven are opened, and 'rivers of living water flow' from the heart of obedient believers.

'In Christ when brethren join,
And follow after peace,
The fellowship divine
He promises to bless,
His chiefest graces to bestow
Where two or three are met below.

'Where unity takes place,
The joys of heaven we prove;
This is the gospel grace,
The unction from above,
The Spirit on all believers shed,
Descending swift from Christ their Head.'

"Accordingly we read, that, when God powerfully opened the kingdom of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, the disciples 'were all with one accord in one place.' And when he confirmed that kingdom, they were lifting up 'their voice to God with one accord.' See Acts ii, 1, and iv, 24. 'Thus also the believers at Samaria were filled with the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, while Peter and John prayed with them, and laid hands upon them.'"

But if we would soon prevail, we must acquire a habit of prayer that overcomes all difficulties and bends to no circumstances. We must pray without ceasing. When we so deeply feel the need of full redemption in the blood of Christ, that whether we walk in the way, or toil in the field, or do business at the counter,

* Last Check, sec. xix.

or are in the domestic or social circle, our souls breathe out every moment the prayer of David, "Give me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," we are upon the very threshold of the inner sanctuary. A little more holding on upon the horns of the altar—a little more faith—one single venture of the whole upon "the everlasting arms," and the work is done.

But let it not be forgotten that the offering up of our prayers for entire sanctification must be characterized by the mental states which I have previously described. We *must fix our attention upon this one object*. This must be everything to us. For the time the hell we would be delivered from, must be the hell of inbred sin; and the heaven we would obtain, the heaven of loving God alone. We must desire it above anything besides. We must come to God with a broken and a contrite heart. We must believe that God is able, and that he is willing to do the work for us, and to do it *now*. With these feelings and views, in this condition of the mind, we must come to God in prayer, and as sure as God is, he will give us the desire of our hearts.

This, then, is the way in which we are to go on to perfection, or to secure that entire sanctification which God, who is *faithful*, has promised, and which we may have, thank God, even *now*.

I will conclude this lecture with several *cautions*.

1. Do not be frightened from your purpose by the heat of the conflict.

A great object is to be gained, and if great difficulties are to be overcome, and great sacrifices to be made, what is this more than should be expected? Indeed, it should little concern us how God shall see proper to bring us to our desired haven, only so that we are safely brought there in due time. And what if, to mortify our pride, he drag us through the mire? What if, to melt our stony hearts, he bring us through the fire? What if, in bringing us into the land of Canaan, he makes us contend with the swellings of Jordan? Yea, what if he bring us through the wilderness—through an enemy's land? What if we are called to encounter fierce opposition, and to hear the noise of war and of the battle, and to take the land at the point of the sword? What of all this? The Captain of our salvation goes out before us, and promises to lead us safely through. He never lost a battle. He has vanquished death—conquered the powers of hell—and procured for us eternal redemption. All we have to do is to trust our cause with him and follow his heavenly guidance. And though he bring us through the fire, or through the water, he will see that we come in safety and in triumph to the mount of holiness, even to our spiritual Jerusalem. But this is a blessing not reserved for the cowardly and the faint-hearted, or for those who lust for the flesh-pots of Egypt. They will die in the wilder-

ness—fall by the hand of the destroyer, and perish miserably for ever and ever.

2. Be not in too great haste to enjoy the *comforts* of this blessed state.

Make the *victory* your object, and you will in due time be enabled to enjoy the spoils. Seek, principally, that the work should be deep and thorough; that your heart should be fully circumcised: that all the enemies of the Lord should be slain, not doubting but when this is done, God will set up the empire of peace in your soul.

3. Be not impatient with apparent delays.

If God does not come at once, it is because you are not ready to receive him. And if your unbelief has delayed the application of the sovereign remedy, why should you find fault with God? Should you throw yourself still further out at sea because you have not been permitted to enter the harbor by an impracticable passage? No, no! Make your observations anew. Improve by your former errors. Ah! abandon your former pilot, worldly prudence, and put yourself under the direction of the one infallible, unerring Guide, who will in due time bring you into the port of peace.

LECTURE XI.

THE MOTIVES AND REASONS FOR SEEKING ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

“Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” Heb. xii, 14.

THE interest of the subject heightens as we proceed—the point next to be considered is in advance of anything heretofore presented. It is indeed important to have right views of the subject. I have accordingly endeavored to present it in as clear a light as possible. But after all, the great object is to feel properly impressed with the importance of a personal experience of the great work in our own hearts. Our knowledge upon the subject will be of comparatively small importance, if we remain unaffected by its great motives. The object of all doctrinal discussion should be to prepare the way for action—to give birth to practical movements.

There is an impressiveness in truth itself which awakens and stirs the mind not armed against it. But there are certain great sanctions whose office especially is to produce the right impressions, and to call the powers of the soul into action. The human mind is so constituted that it will be influenced by motives. And the kingdom of Christ is suited to this feature of man's rational and moral nature. Motives high, vast, glorious, and terrible, are brought to bear upon the requirements of God,

to give them their due importance, and make them practically influential. The great arguments of the gospel must take so deep a hold upon the moral feelings as that the will of God becomes the paramount principle of action. To bring out some of the leading reasons which enforce the duty of seeking entire sanctification—of going on to perfection—shall be the purpose of this lecture.

1. It is the will of God.

This the apostle expressly asserts. "It is the will of God, even your sanctification." 1 Thess. iv, 3. Again: "The God of peace sanctify you wholly. Faithful is he who calleth you, who also will do it." 1 Thess. v, 23, 24. There are two senses in which the will of God may be understood, in both of which it is predicated of our entire sanctification. The first is the *permissive* sense. This implies that God is willing that we should be sanctified wholly; it is in perfect accordance with his *good pleasure*. He has no plan, or purpose, or desire in opposition to our entire conformity to his image. This, considering the evil nature and the ruinous effects of sin, is a development of his goodness, and should of itself be a sufficient reason for our availing ourselves of the privilege so graciously vouchsafed. The case is just this: we have about us the remains of a deadly malady, and our good Physician is willing to put forth his skill, and effect in us a perfect cure. We have in our hearts remaining roots of bitterness, which ever and anon spring up

and trouble us, and our grand Restorer is willing to extract them. Now why should there be any hesitating on our part in relation to the matter? If the sovereign cure is desirable, and God is willing to effect it, why delay a moment in applying for the remedy?

But *secondly*, it is the will of God in the *authoritative* sense—he *requires* us to seek this entire holiness. The length and breadth of the evangelical law is this: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength;” and what is this but a state of entire sanctification?—and what less could God require? There is no disagreement among Christians here; all admit that God requires entire holiness. But the point in which we differ from others is, that we not only logically conclude the attainableness of this state, but urge the *duty* of *seeking* it *now*, from the fact of its being required. And who can show the argument illogical, or the exhortation baseless?

The will of God is paramount law. If we resist or neglect it, we are guilty of disobedience—we contract guilt, and come into condemnation. What then is the condition of those Christians who do not seek at all the entire sanctification which God requires? Are they *doing the will of God*? Let all concerned lay their hand upon their heart and decide this question according to truth and evidence. I must not be understood to say that all who are not entirely sanctified are in a state of damning sin: this

sentiment I have explicitly and honestly disavowed on a former occasion. But what I do mean is, that those Christians who do not seek, and seek constantly, for an entirely-sanctified nature, *fall into condemnation*. And I may add, that this condemnation must be removed by pardon, upon repentance, or it will finally “drown the soul in destruction and perdition.”

The will of God, then, both permissive and authoritative, is a grand reason why we should seek for entire sanctification.

2. I urge the honor and glory of God.

The Westminster Catechism truly teaches us that “man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever.” God made man for his own glory; and in accordance with this end, he made him “in his own image.” It is the image of God in man that reflects the glory of the divine nature. In proportion as man is destitute of this image does he dishonor God, and thwart the high purposes of his being. In our natural, unrenewed state, we are entirely destitute of this image; in our regenerate state its lineaments begin to develop themselves; and in our entire sanctification it is wholly restored. How then can we glorify God fully until we are wholly sanctified?

Again. God is glorified in the accomplishment of the ends of the Saviour’s mission into the world. Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil—he came to abolish sin—to redeem his people from its power, and to wash them from its stains. How then can God,

in the highest sense, be glorified in us until this is accomplished? In the Saviour's memorable prayer, just before his passion, he bore his disciples to the throne of the heavenly grace in this language: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth;" and then says, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." John xvii, 17, 19. He doubtless speaks here of *entire* sanctification, for the disciples had certainly already been made the subjects of the first beginnings of this work. The idea then is that Christ had *sanctified*, i. e., *set apart* himself to the mediatorial work, to the end that his people might be fully sanctified through the truth. The object of the Saviour's mission is then but partially accomplished, and God but partially glorified in us, so long as we are sanctified but in part. Shall we then give the Saviour the honor of a complete triumph over our fallen natures—shall we give to God the whole mead of glory—shall Christ be glorified in us, and "the Father be glorified in the Son," *in our complete restoration to holiness?*

Finally. God is not glorified in our lives until they are fully conformed to his will. St. Paul says, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are his." 1 Cor. vi, 19, 20. "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with

power ; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. i, 11, 12. A blameless and holy life is the only way to honor God before the world. And who can suppose that a life spotted with many sins in "word and deed," as well as in "thought," is as acceptable to God, and as promotive of his glory, as one altogether "unspotted from the world." Every sin soils the Christian's garments, and disgraces his high and holy profession. If the church is the light and glory of the world, and the Christian's walk is the outward expression of the hidden life within, and the imbodiment of the true character of that religion he professes, and the reflection of the image of the invisible God, is it not upright? Should he not, then, walk as Christ also walked? How else can we fully honor God in our lives?

In every view the honor of God is concerned in our present entire sanctification. As, then, we would glorify the God that made us, and the Saviour who has redeemed us, we must seek a heart wholly renewed—we must "go on to perfection."

3. Our *usefulness* in the church and the world is an important consideration in favor of our seeking entire sanctification.

Our Saviour says to his disciples, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. v, 16. If we have been

converted and brought into the church, it is to the end that we may add as much as possible to the common stock of influence and moral power—that we may contribute our quota to the tide of effort that, under God, is to work the regeneration of the world. And it will be admitted on all hands, I presume, that our moral power will be precisely in proportion to the measure of our grace. If we lose our grace, like the salt that has lost its savor, we are “good for nothing.” If we have little grace, we shall do but little good; and if we are “filled with all the fullness of God,” we shall exert a *vast* influence upon the best interests of men.

There are several ways in which we are required to exert a good influence upon the moral condition of others. One of these is by our *words*, in teaching, exhorting, admonishing, and reproving them. When, then, will we be likely to do this work the most effectually? When we are “renewed in knowledge after the image of God,” and when “the love of God is perfected in us,” and when our walk is “unblamable and unreprouvable before God;” or when our understanding is darkened, and our spiritual energies are paralyzed, or at least greatly weakened, by our corruptions; and when those we would benefit turn upon us the soul-withering rebuff, “Physician, heal thyself?” In order to teach the way to heaven with clearness and effect, must we not be deeply and thoroughly acquainted with the things of God? In order to “exhort and reprove with all long-suffering and doc-

trine"—to set our face with confidence against the world, and "testify of it that its works are evil"—must we not be able to say, "Herein do I exercise myself, always to have a conscience void of offense both toward God and men," and "our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, (not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God,) we have had our conversation in the world?" All this Paul could say, and what power did it impart to his preaching,—what potency to his reproofs! The arguments that convince, and the words that burn, come from sanctified lips—come blazing from a heart itself on fire with the perfect love of God.

How important then is a holy ministry! Well was the injunction given, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." The church will scarcely take a higher stand in religion than that which is occupied by the ministry. And the ministry will lead the flock on in paths of peace and holiness in the same proportion in which they are themselves possessed of the spirit of holiness. And they will be a terror to the ungodly, and will check the outbreakings of sin, and curtail the tide of corruption in the world, in the same proportion in which they are possessed of the spirit of the holy prophets, apostles, and blessed martyrs of olden time.

It is, also, vastly important, though it cannot be said to be *equally* important, that exhorters, class-leaders, and superintendents and teachers of sabbath-schools, should be clad with the ar-

mor of holiness and righteousness. Great interests are committed to their trust—they are made, in a measure, responsible for the spiritual improvement and the final salvation of multitudes of souls redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. And the more deeply they are imbued with the Spirit of their Lord and Master, the better and the more successfully will they discharge their important trust.

The same may be said of parents and heads of families ; and, indeed, to a certain extent, of all private Christians. They all are members of the great social compact, and all have gifts to improve for the edification of the church and benefit of mankind. And their vast responsibilities will be met, as they are holy in heart and in life, and in all manner of conversation.

Another mode of serving the interests of the church and the world is by our *prayers*.

We have abundant evidence that the prayers of holy men and women are availing. When God was about to punish the disobedient Israelites, Moses threw himself into the breach, and by his intercessions the sword of justice was stayed. The language of the Almighty upon this occasion gives a strong idea of the power of prayer. Says he, "*Let me alone, that I may destroy them :*" as though the intercessions of his servant bound the hand of justice. While Moses prays, God forbears, though the occasion is one of great provocation. "Elijah prayed, and it rained not upon the earth by the space of three years and six months : and again he

prayed, and the heavens gave rain." The dying martyr Stephen prayed, and the young man, Saul, who kept the garments of them that slew him, was soon after converted. St. Augustine says, If Stephen had not prayed, Saul had not been converted. Though we are not assured of this in the record, yet there is no hazard in presuming a connection between the prayer of the martyr and the conversion of the persecutor.

Indeed, we have the most ample and positive assurances that prayer has mighty influence with God. "He will avenge his own elect who cry day and night unto him. He will do it speedily." And he has even assured us that "*whatsoever*" we "ask in faith, nothing doubting," he "will give it us." This is a wonderful promise, but is no less true than marvelous. It is almost too much to suppose, that no prayer offered up to God in faith can fail of its object. It is still true that all prayers offered up to God in submission and confidence will prevail. The answer may not be given according to our notions of things, or according to our expectations, but will be given in a way far better than we could devise. Paul prayed thrice to God that he would take away the thorn in the flesh. This prayer God answered, but not in the way the apostle expected. The answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee." So our believing prayers will all be answered, either in the thing asked or in an equivalent—or far more than an equivalent. All this is as true in relation to our

intercessions for others as our simple petitions for blessings for ourselves.

When, then, may it be presumed that our prayers will gain the readiest access to the ear of God? When we love him with a perfect love, and believe in him with a perfect faith, and submit to his will with perfect resignation: or when all our graces are mingled with alloy, and deficient in both their compass and vigor? St. John says, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God; and whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." 1 John iii, 21, 22. It is, then, when we do the will of God, and keep a pure conscience, that we can approach God with "confidence" that "whatsoever we ask we shall receive of him."

As we then would bring upon the church a tide of prosperity; as we would hold back the heaviest judgments of Almighty God from a guilty world; as we would have sinners arrested by the Spirit of God; as we would bring peace and joy to those who mourn in Zion; as we would help on believers in seeking for entire deliverance from sin: in fine, as we would have our prayers tell upon the best interests of the church and the world, we must seek entire conformity to the will and image of God. Of what avail will be a few cold, heartless, selfish, formal prayers? They will prove a curse instead of a blessing to mankind. If we would have our prayers availing, we must be moved

by an expansive charity; "bowels of mercy, kindness," &c.; we must exert a commanding faith; we must have *power with God*.

The last mode I shall mention in which we may exert a good influence upon others, in this connection, is that of *example*.

Our Saviour said to his disciples, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid: neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house." Matt. v, 14, 15. Need I attempt to prove that Christians will reflect the most light when they are most conformed to the image of God? As the spots which sometimes appear in the sun do not wholly obstruct its light, so the defects which appear in the lives of Christians, provided they are not striking or numerous, do not render their influence, on the whole, pernicious. Still it cannot be a question but a life wholly free from all moral delinquencies is inconceivably more effective in its influence upon the well-being of society than the one frequently tarnished with acts of disobedience, or of a worldly spirit.

When Christians love the Lord with all their hearts, love the souls of men more than their own ease, honor, or emolument, and "love each other with a pure heart fervently," their example speaks volumes, and preaches more effectively than words in favor of the cause they profess to love. Then they "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." Then the gospel acquires an

influence which wins its way to the hearts of the multitude. The sacramental host of God's elect—clad with the panoply of God, saved from the corruptions which are in the world, and armed with holy faith and mighty prayer—holds in check the powers of hell, and triumphs over the most formidable obstacles. In her infancy, when few in numbers, the church, by her purity, silenced the objections of philosophers, and broke the power of persecution—successfully assailed the strong holds of superstition, and finally demolished the whole fabric of idolatry, which had been rendered venerable and sacred by the lapse of ages. She “quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness was made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” The simple preaching of the cross, accompanied by a holy, self-denying life, like an earthquake struck dumb a giddy and clamorous world, and carried terror to the very gates of hell! Who can look back to the period when Christianity achieved her noblest triumphs, and see altars and temples crumbling to dust, and the gods of the heathen given to the moles and to the bats—the church multiplied and increased under the bloodiest persecutions—martyrs going to the stake in ecstasy, and their very executioners converted by the grandeur of their examples, and in their turn following them to the possession of the martyr's crown—who, I say, can survey these scenes without feeling

convinced that there is a power altogether unearthly in a life of purity and self-denial?

These wonderful demonstrations are, no doubt, to be expected in the latter times. The church is destined to a higher grade of purity than she now enjoys. And when the purity and simplicity of the apostolic age shall characterize the great mass of Christian believers—when the institutions of Christianity shall be strictly conformed to the original plan, and the members of the church shall all stand forth completely armed with “the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,” then will “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” Dan. vii, 27.

That we may act favorably upon the condition of the church and upon the destinies of the world in all these various respects, we must be holy. And if we would exert the most potent influence upon these great interests we should seek entire sanctification.

4. Our own best interests require that we seek entire sanctification without the least delay.

I have before urged that it will be a safeguard against backsliding and apostasy. It is equally sure that we shall make the most certain and rapid progress in the divine life, and

enjoy the greatest amount of spiritual consolation, if we aspire to the whole mind of Christ. Then may we "always" be caused "to triumph in Christ"—"rejoice evermore: pray without ceasing: in everything give thanks."

We complain of a want of religious comfort—we go mourning with our heads bowed down like a bulrush, and scarcely suspect the cause to be the want of the high state of grace which I here urge. How little solid religious comfort have most Christians! And the cause is, that they have so little love, so little faith, so little likeness to Christ—so much conformity to the world. We sometimes almost reflect upon God on account of our barrenness of enjoyment and our many failures. But God has only promised us his abiding presence, and a fullness of divine consolation, and constant victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, on the condition that we devote ourselves unreservedly to him—that we "go on to perfection." But, alas for us! we are looking for the end without the means; we want the crown, but will not bear the cross; we thirst for the reward, but object to the labor and the sacrifice.

The crosses and burdens of Christianity are easy and sweet to him who is fully sanctified. The duties, the most grievous to flesh and blood, are to him a source of sacred pleasure. He says, in the language of the poet,—

"Labor is rest, and pain is sweet,
If thou, my God, art here."

Whether called to endure toils or make sacri-

fices, to suffer afflictions or endure reproaches ; yea, if required, to leave home and kindred, and take up his abode with savage men—to exchange the delicacies and refinements of the city, of the parlor, and the toilet, for the destitution of the wilderness, and the filth of the wigwam, he is ready to say, “ What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith : that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death ; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” Phil. iii, 7–11.

And is there not something truly desirable in the testimony of a good conscience, and a full assurance of the divine protection and blessing ? If we can lie down to rest with peace of mind, and a full assurance that whether we awake in this world or the other, all is well ; and arise in the morning with a grateful song of praise bursting from a full heart ; surely we are in an enviable state of mind. In a world of utter uncertainty and fluctuation, what state so desirable as that which is implied in the language of Paul : “ Who shall separate us from the love

of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. viii, 35-39. This is the present triumph of perfect love. How desirable is this state, then, if we look merely to the present life!

But how does the importance of the attainment increase when we look to the final hour? When called to contend with the swellings of Jordan, of what inconceivable importance will it be to us to be in a state of entire readiness to pass into our changeless state! Mr. Wesley gives it as his opinion, that most Christians are not wholly sanctified until just before death. The evidence of this is not only the fact that they do not enjoy the blessedness of the state of perfect love for any considerable portion of their lives, but also the fact, that as they approach the final struggle, they usually pass through a series of painful and agonizing regrets with regard to the past, and the most distressing misgivings with regard to their future and final state; and are brought at length to a

full surrender of themselves to God, and then they resign the world with all its dearest interests, and sink into eternity full of hope. Now believing, as we do, that we may pass through this struggle, and come into the possession of a faith that lays firm hold of immortality any length of time before death, as well as in its immediate prospect, why should we delay the work until the moment in which, above all others, it is the most difficult? How much better to be able to say with Dr. Clarke, who, when his friends saw his end was near, and suggested to him that it would be necessary for him to prepare soon to meet his Judge, said promptly, *I have prepared already*: to feel that we are *ready* for the approach of death in any form and at any time; and when death shall come, to welcome him without fear or alarm: to be able to say with Paul, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." 2 Tim. iv, 6-8.

Look, also, to the day of judgment, and to an eternal state, and see what an accumulation of motives here present themselves for an early and complete victory over sin. Will it be of no importance, then, that we shall have triumphed early over the evils of our natures

Will it detract nothing from our honor and happiness that we retained to the very last in our hearts some of the enemies of the Lord? In what light will we then view our littleness of faith, our apathy in relation to the great work of entire holiness? When Wesley, and Fletcher, and Carvosso, and others are seated near the throne, where will we be? These are serious questions, which it becomes us wisely to answer. But I must forbear. The theme is one in the sublimity of which our utmost conceptions fail.

If the souls of men are precious; if we are made in any measure responsible for them; if heaven and hell are realities; and the judgment day is not a phantom, "let us go on to perfection." O let us be moved by the Saviour's sweat, and tears, and blood; by the agonies of the garden; by the groans of Calvary; by the solemnities of death; by the terrors of the judgment; by the pains of hell and by the joys of heaven, to *go on to perfection*! Pressed by such motives, why "stand" we "here all the day idle?" Earth groans! heaven invites! hell threatens! and yet we sleep!! Time flies, the Saviour woos, eternity is at hand!!! When will the great—the all-absorbing motives of God's word exert there appropriate influence upon Christians? Shall we be moved by the trifles around us? shall we spend our time and strength in laboring to acquire riches, honors, and pleasures? and shall there be no place in

our minds for such considerations as I have adduced?

“Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all thy quick’ning powers,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours.”

LECTURE XII.

THE EVIDENCES OF ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself.” 1 John v, 10.

It is but reasonable to conclude that if such a state as we contend for is ever attained in the present life, it would be accompanied by certain signs or evidences which would satisfactorily indicate its existence; at least the subject of it would have some sort of evidence of his being in that state. It shall be the object of the present lecture to inquire into the evidence which a person entirely sanctified may be expected to have of that great change.

And in the *first* place, fully to guard against all mistaken conclusions, it will be proper to consider the subject negatively—to speak of several things which are not to be considered as evidences of this state.

1. Exemption from temptation is not to be considered as a consequence of the great change

implied in entire sanctification, or the continued enjoyment of that holy and blessed state.

Temptation in general signifies *trial* or *test*; and when it has reference to moral evil, it is permitted as a trial of our faith or virtue. Temptations to sin are from without—that is, they are not impulsions of the mind, but the suggestions or solicitations of an evil agent. Evil impulses are themselves sin. They arise from the corruptions of the heart. “From the heart proceedeth evil things,” &c. A heart that sends forth, as a fountain its streams, corrupt impulses, must consequently be unsanctified. But the assaults of evil agents may be made upon the purest mind. Our Lord Jesus Christ “was in all points tempted like as we are, and yet without sin.” The great difference between the temptations of those who are entirely sanctified and those who are not, is, that the temptation coming into contact with the latter, often stirs the sediment of corruption, while, assailing with equal violence the former, it meets with uniform resistance, and leaves no trace behind but an increase of moral power and the fruits of a new triumph.

The following views of the subject of temptation cast much light upon its most common and ordinary forms. I do not present them as a perfect analysis of the whole subject, nor wish them to go for authority any further than they are true to the decisions of Scripture and experience. Dr. Bates says of temptations:

“1. They may be distinguished by their

quality. Unnatural thoughts against ourselves, and blasphemous of God, are usually from the tempter.

“2. When they make terrible impressions upon our spirits, they are his fiery darts. For the native offspring of our hearts are conceived with freedom and complacency.

“3. They are our infelicities, but produce no guilt when resisted by us. As the virgin that cried out for rescue from violence was declared by God himself innocent, so when the tempted soul, with strong cries, prays for divine relief, God will not lay those terrible injections to our charge. Our Saviour was tempted by the unclean spirit, yet was holy, harmless, and undefiled, (Matt. iv, Heb. vii, 26,) and has a compassionate tenderness for those who are tempted, and will make them partake of the fruits of his glorious victory. It is true, if the injections of Satan are cherished by the carnal mind, they are ours by adoption, though of his begetting. The devil put in the heart of Judas the design of betraying Christ, but it was entertained by his covetous mind, and involved him under the heaviest guilt. The inclinations of carnal men are to various sins, to which they are more inclinable by the temptations of Satan; but that does not excuse them from guilt.”*

Another Christian philosopher presents the subject in the following perspicuous language:

“Temptations, it will undoubtedly be conceded by those who have paid attention to the

* Spiritual Perfection, pp. 85, 86.

subject, are objects which are presented by the intellect to the sensibilities and the will; and are of such a nature that they have a tendency to induce or cause in those sensibilities, (that is to say, in the appetites, propensities, and affections,) and also in the will, an inordinate, excessive, or perverted action. The incipient, and what may be termed the *innocent* stage of the temptation, is when the object which is the medium of temptation is first presented to us intellectually; that is to say, in our mere thoughts or perceptions. Our Saviour was tempted by having the kingdoms and wealth of this world presented before him, as objects of desire; but the temptation went no further than the thoughts. It had no effect upon his desires or will; but was immediately rejected. It was necessary that the object of temptation should exist intellectually; in other words, that it should exist in the thoughts, or be perceived and thought of. Without this, viz., the perceived or intellective presence of the object, it is entirely clear that there could not possibly be any such thing as temptation. But the temptation may exist to this extent without sin. The temptations, for instance, to which the Saviour was subjected, were in every instance entirely without sin; for the simple reason, that they did not go beyond the thoughts; they did not enter into the emotions and desires; they excited no favorable or assenting feeling: they caused no accordant action of the will; but were instantly and fully repelled. They were

not like sparks thrown upon tinder, and kindled into a blaze ; but rather like sparks thrown upon the ocean, and instantly extinguished.”*

It is a question not always of easy solution, at what point the *mere temptation* terminates and *sin* begins—or when we may be said to *enter into temptation*. It will not be consistent with my general object in this lecture to enter into the metaphysics of this question. I wish to present the subject in as plain and practical a manner as possible, and not to go into a recondite disquisition, which would rather perplex the subject than render aid to the serious inquirer. I shall, then, simply lay down a few general principles which, I hope, will be obvious and indisputable.

First, then, I suppose all will admit, that when the temptation gains the concurrence of the will, the subject contracts *guilt*. There can be no doubt here. The consent of the mind to a single act, or a course of actions, which God has forbidden, will bring upon us his displeasure ; nor will the *violence* of the temptation, or our natural tendencies toward the inhibited object, be any apology for our fault. For though God, for wise reasons, suffers us to be tempted, yet the temptations which he permits are not irresistible.

Secondly. It is equally clear, that when the temptation begets in the mind a *desire* for the forbidden object, the subject *enters into temptation*, and so sins against God. The perfectly-

* Guide to Perfection.

formed desire, resting upon a forbidden object, is positive proof of an alienation of the affections from God, and of inherent depravity, the workings of which God must ever abhor.

Thirdly. It is also clear that temptations cannot be *invited*, or *unnecessarily protracted*, without an indication of a sinful tendency toward the forbidden object, and consequently such a course not only implies the absence of entire sanctification, but involves the subject in actual sin. The pure mind will not only resist the assaults of evil, but will, as far as practicable, fly its very presence.

Another question of no little delicacy is, how far we are responsible for our *spontaneous emotions*—how far they go toward making up the moral character, and when they imply unsanctified affections. There can be no doubt but this class of mental states is much under the influence of our habits of thought and feeling: that those whose minds are most decidedly under the influence of religious considerations and feelings will experience the fewest instances of such sudden and transient mental emotions as seem to indicate internal corruptions, or unsanctified affections, or are of doubtful character. It may be in some cases difficult to determine whether our spontaneous emotions are the workings of a morbid state of the moral feelings, or purely the temptations of Satan. It is probable God, in his wisdom, has left the line of distinction between these mental states so deep and obscure, for the purpose of exer-

cising our faculties of moral discrimination. And it is not to be questioned but those who the most constantly and carefully watch the operations of their own minds, and investigate the origin and tendency of their mental processes, will be the least liable to err fatally in their decisions upon this point. In a pure and healthy state of the mind, it will not be difficult, in general, to come to right conclusions in relation to the moral character of our thoughts and feelings—at least so far as is necessary to all practical purposes; and more than this is not at all essential. We should labor for such a knowledge of our own hearts, and of the great rule of moral duty, that we need not fall into the fatal conclusion, either that our temptations and infirmities are *sins*, or that our *real sins* are nothing but temptations or infirmities.

2. Uninterrupted joy is not to be regarded as an infallible accompaniment of entire sanctification.

Persons in a state of mere justification may often be filled with strong consolation, and at times be raised to ecstasies of joy; while it remains a fact that those whose whole soul and body are laid upon the altar are often in heaviness, for various causes. The changes in our physical constitution will often interrupt our joy. Sorrow may be a necessary discipline for the most perfect Christian, to advance his graces and keep him from falling.

It is not to be doubted but there have been cases of persons who, upon some extraordinary

rapture, have erroneously supposed that all their corruptions were taken away. And it is also a fact that some who have probably experienced the blessing of perfect love have given up their confidence upon some season of sorrow, erroneously supposing that if they were freed from sin they would never sorrow more.

Lady Maxwell says, "The Lord has taught me that it is by faith, and not joy, that I must live. He has, in a measure, often enabled me strongly to act faith on Jesus for sanctification, even in the absence of all comfort. This has diffused a heaven of sweetness through my soul, and brought with it the powerful witness of purity." Carvosso quotes this passage, and remarks upon it: "I have recorded these remarks, because they so perfectly agree with my own views and experience."* Two more competent witnesses in a case of this kind could scarcely be desired.

3. It need not be expected that a state of entire consecration to God will always be accompanied by extraordinary gifts.

The entirely sanctified minister will still have about him his natural or constitutional infirmities. He will probably be no more accurate or fluent in his manner of communicating his thoughts than before, and may not be so much so as many others of far less religious attainments. There is a difference between gifts and grace. We may have an extraordinary amount of one, with but little of the other.

* Memoir of Carvosso, p. 193.

4. Great apparent success is not to be considered as an evidence of this state.

Many ministers, with a small amount of grace, and some, indeed, with none at all, have been very successful : and many holy men have appeared for the time to labor in vain, and spend their strength for naught. This unfruitfulness, however, is only in appearance. Futurity will develop the blessed effects of their pious toil. God will see to that. It is for us to labor in the right spirit, and it is with God to give the increase.

I shall now proceed to present what I conceive may be considered satisfactory evidence of a state of entire sanctification.

1. The witness of the Spirit—the testimony of God's Spirit that the soul is entirely sanctified.

I shall not now inquire whether any have ever felt this inward testimony, presuming that the fact will be supposed credible or incredible, as the evidence I have adduced in favor of the fact, that some have been entirely sanctified in this life, shall be credited or otherwise ; for if it is conceded that this state is attainable, and has been attained, it will not, I presume, be very strenuously disputed but that it would probably be accompanied by satisfactory evidence of its existence. A satisfactory evidence of a work of grace in general has been admitted by evangelical divines, as well Calvinist as Arminian. Indeed, this seems clearly settled in the Scriptures. St. Paul says, "The Spirit

itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." Rom. viii, 16. Upon this passage the learned Diodati, who was a member of the synod of Dort, and assisted in drawing up the Belgic confession, makes the following comment: "'The Spirit'—viz., As he sets us on to call God our father, so likewise assureth us on his part, and sealeth it in our hearts, that we are truly his children."*

The Westminster divines upon this passage say, "The Holy Ghost doth not only stir us up to call upon God as our father, but doth also seal unto our hearts, that we are truly his children: thus the Spirit testifieth to our spirit, (as some render the words;) but if we translate them, 'beareth witness with our spirits,' the meaning is, that the Spirit witnesseth together with our own spirit, which doth likewise help to bear witness by observing the proper marks of God's adoption, which our spirit findeth in ourselves by the Spirit of God. This witness, though it be not always alike evident and powerful in true believers, yet it doth oftentimes manifest itself, even when they are in their lowest estate and greatest extremity."†

St. John also clearly declares this doctrine. He says, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." 1 John v, 10. Upon these words Diodati says: "*In himself*—That is to say, sounding, and imprinted in his heart, by the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in him, and

* See Diodati's Annotations, *in loc.*

† Annotations, *in loc.*

certifies, and puts him out of doubt, concerning this truth.”*

Here then we have explicit proof from the New Testament, according to the interpretations of the best Calvinistic authorities, of *the witness of the Spirit*—the testimony of the Spirit of God to the truth of our adoption. I need bring no further proof that this doctrine is taught in the Bible, or that it has been held by evangelical Calvinists, but may consider the matter as settled.

What I would now urge is, that if a sensible evidence of adoption may be expected, the same kind of evidence may be expected, with increased lustre, to accompany the different stages of our progress in holiness. If God vouchsafe to the merely justified an evidence of gracious acceptance, would he be likely to withhold from those, whose hearts are entirely consecrated to him, an evidence that the offering is accepted? Indeed, the doctrines of the evidence of adoption, and of entire sanctification in this life, being proved, it seems a matter of course that the inward testimony of the Spirit to the truth of the latter, whenever it takes place, would be afforded. But this testimony must be sustained by other evidences, which I shall now proceed to notice.

2. The inward testimony must be accompanied by a consciousness of victory over sin.

The body of sin being destroyed, none of its motions must remain. I hope I have been suf-

* Annotations.

ficiently explicit on the subject of *temptations* and *infirmities*. We do not take these into the reckoning when we speak of the *motions* of sin, but refer wholly to those irregularities in the movements of the soul which are opposed to the will of God, and are consequently inconsistent with a state of entire conformity to that will. When the soul is entirely sanctified, all these irregular motions subside. Temptations may assault a soul in this state, but they wake up no rebellion, they agitate no unholy elements. The soul is firmly fixed upon the Rock of ages, and fully armed against every assault. The conflicts of such, though often severe, and sometimes protracted, finally terminate in a triumph over the enemy. They have not to bewail their sad defeats in the language of the poet,—

“ Here I repent, and sin again,
Now I revive, and now am slain;
Slain by the same unhappy dart,
Which O! too often wounds my heart.”

On the other hand their language is, “Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

3. Another evidence of this high and holy state is a deep and constant current of love flowing out toward God and all mankind.

This love is the same in principle which is felt by the merely justified soul, but differs in its *strength* and *uniformity*. The entirely sanctified soul loves God supremely, and without interruption. No earthly object intervenes be-

tween him and his God. Objects there are indeed which are dear to his heart, but they are placed in subordination to God. They are God's creatures, and are loved for his sake, but never take his place. This precious, perfect love of God burns like a fire in the heart of the fully sanctified. It melts down and consumes all obstacles—it "brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

The practical operations of this great principle are clearly and strongly represented by the great apostle. "Charity," (*αγαπη*, *love*,) says he, "suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth." 1 Cor. xiii, 4-8.

All this is fulfilled in those who are made perfect in love. And it would be strange if these various operations of love were not matters of personal consciousness—if the subjects of them were unable to distinguish between the genuine workings of this heaven-born principle and the operations of unsanctified affections.

It has been made a question whether this love is wholly disinterested, or whether it is consistent with any regard to our own interests or happiness. Upon this question there has been much idle and injurious speculation. I have no disposition to enter into the metaphysical

subtilities in which this point has been involved, though a brief statement of the true view may be necessary here.

I conceive that all the *disinterested benevolence* that has any foundation in the word of God is *a benevolence which does not suffer self to interfere with the public good, or with any revealed purpose of God.* Further than this we are not required in the Bible, nor indeed is it possible for us, in the present state, to give up a regard to our own personal interests. But this does not require us to be willing that we ourselves, or our children, or our friends, should be damned. God will undoubtedly send the wicked to hell, and he will be justified by the universe of intelligences in the act. But still it is a truth that he has “no pleasure in the death of the wicked,” and what reason is there why we should have more “pleasure” in this fearful exhibition of God’s justice than he has himself? If it were indeed possible for us to be willing to be damned ourselves, we should in that state of mind be wholly incompetent to feel the force of a world of motives set forth in the word of God. But if I understand the doctrine of disinterested benevolence, as it is called, it is something which *never has existed, never will, nor can* exist among men. It is a very different thing from the regard to the general interest, and an abandonment of the selfish principle—the principle of pursuing the interests of self at the expense of the general good—which is essential to religion and the well-being of

society. This neither requires us to forfeit any real good nor to be reconciled to any real evil. But to proceed.

4. Perfect submission to the will of God is a state of mind which will always accompany entire sanctification.

The perfect Christian will have no will of his own ; the will of God will be both his rule and his delight. When he knows this, though it may require him to make sacrifices, or to endure hardships, unexpected and unparalleled, he says, "Thy will be done." All his motives and actions must be in accordance with the revealed will of God, so far as he is capable of understanding what that is. The father of the faithful was required to offer up his beloved son Isaac as a sacrifice upon one of the mountains of Moriah. And though a more costly sacrifice could not have been demanded of him, he instantly said, Isaac must be given up! This was a great effort of faith, and perhaps an unparalleled instance of submission. But we shall always meet occasions to try us whether we will do the will of God, *when it costs us something*. And if we pause and object when the manifestation of God's good pleasure is clear and undoubted, there is in us a want of entire conformity to the will of God.

5. Those who are made perfect in love will feel entire and unwavering confidence in God.

Storms may gather over the heads of the fully sanctified, dangers may threaten them, tempests

of adversity may actually break upon them—they may see no way of escape; but though not able to walk by *sight*, they can walk by *faith*, and so they are not moved. St. John says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” 1 John iv, 18.

6. Such will enjoy uninterrupted communion with God.

That the Christian has fellowship with God is both presumed and directly declared in numerous places in the Scriptures. St. Paul speaks of the “fellowship of the Spirit,” Phil. ii, 1; and “the communion of the Holy Ghost.” 2 Cor. xiii, 14. And St. John says, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John i, 3. And Christ says, “If a man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” John xiv, 23. All this implies—1. The presence of the Holy Trinity. 2. Concord, or agreement. And, 3. Intercourse between God and the soul.

And this fellowship, it may be presumed, is *sensible*—it is something of which the soul is conscious. It is not a flight of the imagination, nor an ecstasy, but a consciousness of the presence, the love, and the favor of God, which fill and elevate the soul. And what will interrupt this holy communion with God, if the mind is constantly fixed upon him? In the fully

sanctified this heavenly intercourse is constant and uninterrupted.

“No changes of season or place,”—

no bodily sufferings or privations, no amount of temptations, will sunder the cords by which God and the sanctified spirit are united. Witness the triumphant language of St. Paul upon this subject: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom. viii, 35–39.

But this blessed security of the soul, it must not be forgotten, implies inviolable fidelity—its steadfast adherence to Christ. “The love of Christ” implies not only Christ’s love to us, but our love to him. And this love, growing out of a lively faith, is the principle of reciprocity—of change and interchange between God and the soul. What then but some sad delinquency on our part, some want of the requisite purity of heart, will interrupt this intercourse? If then our love to God be “made perfect,” may

it not be expected that our communion with him will be constant and uninterrupted? It may indeed vary in its sensible manifestations, but will not wholly subside, until our iniquities separate between us and our God, and our sins hide his face from us. Isa. lix, 2.

Is not this a most blessed state—to feel that God is one with us, and makes his “face to shine upon us?” How it turns the world, which otherwise is a gloomy prison, into a paradise! But I must not enlarge.

7. In the last place I would observe, that the person who has come into this blessed state will be able to mark the several successive steps through which he passed from the lower stages of religious experience.

If your soul has passed the barrier between you and this full salvation, my dear brother, you can mark the period when your inward corruptions were a burden, intolerable to be borne—when you desired deliverance from them more than anything besides: when you resolved, in the strength of God, to seek this great salvation; when it began to appear near at hand; when you was able to consider it as present, and claim it as your own. You can recollect the revolution which then took place in the whole train of your views and feelings. How gloriously resplendent appeared the character of God—the cross of Christ—the way of holiness! How easy it was to believe, to love, to obey;—how small you seemed to yourself;—how worthless all your best performances;—

how the world receded from your view, and heaven and glory appeared to come down to earth;—how you desired that this heavenly state might be the common privilege of all Christians, and how you immediately began to talk of the great things God had done for you!

These I consider the evidences which in all ordinary cases may rationally and scripturally be expected to accompany the great change for which we contend. Some of them may be stronger than others, and some of them may be occasionally a little obscured by circumstances, but a careful examination will bring them to view. And where all these evidences are to be found, there it may safely be concluded God has wrought the great work of entire sanctification. But of the verity of the testimony the subject himself is, in the nature of the case, the only competent judge. He can only so analyze and understand his own feelings as to judge of them safely and truly. He consequently cannot safely submit his case to others for their authoritative decision. The matter is between him and his God: and though it will be useful for him to converse with eminently-holy persons, and take their advice, and listen to their instructions, he must not go to any mortal for the decision of the great question, whether he has met the terms of entire sanctification, and received the impression of the seal upon his heart. This is a matter of consciousness and of induction which belongs wholly to himself,

and which involves personal responsibilities which he can transfer to no other.

I will close this lecture with a single word of advice. Let those who are seeking the great blessing of a clean heart guard equally against *credulity* and *skepticism*.

You may be too ready to believe that God has wholly removed your corruptions. The suggestion that this is actually the case may be from the devil, designed by your arch foe to prevent you from truly coming into the possession of the blessing by a thorough prosecution of the great work of seeking it with all your heart. As seekers of religion are sometimes deceived, and build an evidence of pardon upon a false basis, so may you conclude you are indeed fully sanctified before you are. I have little doubt but this is the case with many, and when they afterward find themselves possessed of evil tempers, they conclude they have lost the blessing, and then are naturally led into the erroneous and discouraging conclusion, that it is a state most difficult if not impossible to be retained. It is consequently of great importance that we proceed with care in the examination of our hearts, and in judging of the indications that they are wholly the Lord's. It is dangerous to fail here. O how should we pray to God to *search* us, and *prove* us, and *teach* us *what we know not* !

But, upon the other hand, we may be too slow to understand the character of the work God is carrying on in our hearts. We may re-

quire higher and stronger demonstrations of its character and integrity than is consistent with the determinations of infinite wisdom. We may wish "a sign from heaven"—an extraordinary revelation, and may be unwilling to credit the truth of the work until this is vouchsafed. In this way we may rob our own souls of the comforts of the blessing, grieve the Holy Spirit, and give into the hands of the enemy a grand triumph. Our own unworthiness, our former unfaithfulness, or the greatness of the work, must not interfere to blind our eyes to God's gracious manifestations. The more unworthy the subject, and the greater the work, the more glory will redound to God. Turn your eyes then, my brethren, from yourselves to God—the amplitude of his gracious designs, and of his resources to carry them into full effect. Be not distrustful. He who commands the winds and the seas is at the helm. Hear his interrogation, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Let your answer be, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." And when the work is accomplished, be not like the nine lepers who went their way, but like the one *stranger* who returned, and with a loud voice gave glory to God. And be assured that you will glorify him truly by recognizing his work in all its extent, and making no conditions upon which you will acknowledge the work accomplished. Simplicity of purpose, honesty and diligence, will secure you effectually against all deception.

LECTURE XIII.

ADDRESS TO PROFESSORS OF CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matt. v, 16.

I FEEL it incumbent upon me, before I leave this subject, to give a word of advice to such as make profession of the blessing of entire sanctification. This part of my duty I approach with great diffidence, as I feel it would be much more appropriate for me to sit at the feet of those I address, and learn of them my duty, than to assume the character of an instructor to them. Knowing, however, that a prominent trait in the character of perfect Christians is deep humility, I cannot doubt but all such will be ready to receive instruction from even the feeblest of Christ's servants. This consideration gives me some confidence to proceed in the discharge of a duty which, under other circumstances, would be quite insupportable.

Permit me then, dear brethren, to enter somewhat into detail, and urge upon your attention several things which I consider of great importance to your own spiritual prosperity, and your usefulness in the church and in the world. For advices of a general character, and for much special instruction, you will do well to

consult Mr. Wesley's Plain Account of Christian Perfection, and Mr. Fletcher's Address to Perfect Christians. Little more indeed of importance can be said of a practical nature than may be gathered from these writers. A few points, however, need at the present time to be made more prominent, which existing circumstances require should be constantly present to the view of that class of persons whom I immediately address. The present position of the controversy:—the errors of several classes of perfectionists, and the perpetual effort to convict our system of a tendency to these errors:—the deep solicitude manifested upon the part of many serious persons, both among our own people, and of other Christian communions, to receive light upon the subject, and to be aided in their efforts for holiness:—devolve high responsibilities upon you. Perhaps there never was a time since the age of the holy apostles when it was more important that the doctrine of Christian perfection should appear a vital reality.

1. I would first advise you to study the doctrine of Christian perfection with great care.

The only infallible source of information upon the doctrines of religion is the Holy Bible. Read this blessed book, particularly the practical and devotional parts of it, with a desire to find the true standard of religious experience and practice which is there set up. Read this book with attention, read it with reverence, read it with solicitude, read it with prayer. When

you open the sacred pages of the Book of books, let your prayer to God be, "What I know not teach thou me."

Next to the Bible study Wesley's Plain Account. I say *study* it, for "*plain*" as is that "*account*," it is by no means to be understood fully without study and reflection. The definitions, the distinctions, the arguments, should be so thoroughly impressed upon your minds that you can conceive of and use them with circumstantial accuracy at any moment. The want of the accurate knowledge of what Mr. Wesley says upon many points of this great subject, on the part of those who profess to follow him, and particularly those who profess this blessing, has often led them to express themselves inconsistently, and thus to give occasion for great scandal. Our opponents do not fail to take advantage of all such cases, and to use them to the great prejudice of the doctrine itself. I do not say that you cannot *enjoy* the blessing of perfect love without the clear understanding of the subject here inculcated; I speak with reference to your *usefulness*—the influence you will exert upon others, and especially the more thinking and intelligent portion of your fellow-Christians.

Next to Mr. Wesley read Mr. Fletcher. His productions upon the subject of Christian perfection are logical, argumentative, and powerfully persuasive. There is an unction accompanying his thoughts and language which touches the secret springs of the soul, and

eminently prepares it to receive instruction, and to enter upon immediate action.

Read the lives of the holy men and women who lived and died in the enjoyment of perfect love :—such as Bramwell, Carvosso, Mrs. Fletcher, Lady Maxwell, and Mrs. Rogers. These will give you light as well as heat—will present clearly the practical workings of the principle.

Finally, converse with wise and godly persons upon the subject upon all proper occasions ; and be sure that you always manifest, upon these occasions, a teachable spirit. Do not think, because you are older in religion, or have experienced more of the blessings of the great salvation than others, that therefore they can teach you nothing. If it be true that you are much *better* than they are, still they may be much *wiser* than you are, and it becomes you to learn all you can, even from those who may be your inferiors in all respects, and certainly from those who are your superiors in wisdom, and in the consideration and confidence of the church.

I urge these efforts to acquire clear and consistent views upon the subject of Christian perfection, because upon you devolves the great responsibility of practically carrying out and sustaining the great principles which it involves. Those Christians who are skeptical with regard to the doctrine will turn their eyes from our *books*, and gaze upon *you*, and they will try your words, and scrutinize your language : and

if they see evidence to believe that you know not what you say, nor whereof you affirm, what will be their conclusion? They will too frequently reason from particulars to generals, and say these professors of Christian perfection are all bewildered—they can give no intelligible account of the matter—they do not understand their own authors. And they will be likely to conclude that the cause of all this confusion of thought arises from the nature of the subject, or the manner in which it has been treated. And thus the cause is injured—the theme itself is degraded, when the fault is only yours. O, how much has this great gospel doctrine suffered through the unskillfulness of its professed friends! Brethren, I would have you always awake to the greatness, the magnificence of the subject, and ever jealous of its honor, and jealous of yourselves, lest the doctrine, true, and lovely, and glorious as it is, should suffer reproach through the ignorance of its chief representatives.

But the *credit of the doctrine* is not the only reason why it should be well understood by those who profess to have felt its power. It is of infinite importance to themselves. How many begin well in the career of Christian holiness, who soon relax their efforts, and lose their interest in the subject! This general fact may result from several causes: but I doubt not a very common cause will be found to be radical mistakes as to the nature of the blessing they were seeking, or had measurably received.

They had taken up the erroneous conclusion that the state of entire sanctification implied a kind of physical renovation, or visions and revelations, or a series of ecstasies, or at least a constant tide of joy. Finding their feelings to subside and to vary, through physical causes or change of circumstances, they have been led to the conclusion that the state is above mortality, or at least *too high* for *them*, and so they have let go their hold. Timely and proper instruction upon the subject would probably have guarded them against these sad reverses, and have enabled them to hold on their way, and wax stronger and stronger, instead of falling into the snare of the grand adversary. If, then, you would be proof against the devices of the devil, you must avoid capital errors; and if you would avoid capital errors, you must carefully study the subject.

2. The next advice I would give is, that you beware of spiritual pride.

By spiritual pride, I mean too high an opinion of your own piety and usefulness. You are imminently exposed to this temptation, from the circumstances that your character and professions will bring around you many persons who may be greatly your superiors in many respects, but who will often seek your advice and instructions touching the way of holiness. Beware lest such instances should work upon your spirit—should give you high ideas of yourselves—should elevate you, in your own estimation, above your brethren. There may

be many reasons for mortification and self-abasement of which you are not aware, and there is imminent danger of suffering your zeal in the cause of holiness to degenerate into a desire for distinction and pre-eminence. Should you be taken by this snare of the grand adversary, you might be led on to affect eminent sanctity from selfish motives, and ultimately be left to fall and perish!

This deadly foe to true Christian perfection, spiritual pride, sometimes develops itself in a kind of affected humility. All studied efforts to show off our low views of ourselves—either a phraseology or a general bearing which evidently exhibits an *effort to appear* humble—is looked upon by the observing with distrust. A simplicity of manner, and an unaffected humility, which can only result from a thorough knowledge of ourselves—of our weakness, unprofitableness, ignorance, and short comings—are the true ornaments of the Christian character; and must not be wanting, especially in *you*.

3. Beware of putting too much confidence in extraordinary manifestations.

I would by no means throw doubt on such extraordinary instances of divine communications, and immediate answers to prayer, as are to be found in the history of the religious experience of some pious persons; nor would I lightly estimate such peculiar divine interpositions. But what I would have you guard against is, a notion that these things are always an accompaniment of an eminent degree of

Christian holiness. God was never prodigal of miraculous gifts, nor were these always the strongest evidences of deep communion with him. St. Paul supposes it possible to have a *wonder-working faith*, and yet to be without *charity*. But the age of miracles has passed away, and the holiest men and women upon earth are equally subject with others to the ordinary laws of nature and providence, and compelled to "walk by faith, not by sight." We should remember that the highest excellence, and the sum of all perfection, is *love*: to love God with all the heart is more to be desired than the power to raise the dead to life. This is the true glory of the Christian character, and the most acceptable to God of all attainments which may be imagined possible.

4. Beware of all extravagances in your religious exercises.

I would not discourage a Scriptural and reverent expression of feeling in your religious devotions—far from it—I would encourage and urge this as a duty, as well as a privilege. But all *undue* and *overstrained* efforts of the voice—all uncouth contortions of the body—anything in gesture or language calculated to excite ludicrous emotions, or to bring religion in general, or Christian perfection in particular, into contempt, should be carefully avoided. Every one knows well the difference between true religion and extravagant muscular exertion. No one ever understood this better than did Mr. Wesley himself, and no man ever spoke more deci

dedly and scripturally upon the subject than he did. Labor always to feel chastened, fervent, holy emotions, and your outward expressions will be decent, grave, and impressive. You will be likely to give no offense to good taste, and to give no occasion to the devil to buffet you. True devotional feeling is the result of divine influence, and is not to be *got up* by physical efforts. Prayer and faith—wrestling with God—is the appointed way to the inner sanctuary of deep communion with the Invisible.

5. On all proper occasions communicate to your brethren what God has done for you.

The lamp of holiness is not lit up to be put under a bushel, but to be set up in a prominent place, that it may give light to all around. Nor is there any reason why God should not be glorified in this great and precious gift, in the same manner that he is in the lower degrees of grace. But I say, on all *proper* occasions, and not on all occasions indiscriminately. And as to what are proper occasions, you must generally judge for yourselves. It is easy to see that it would not be proper to speak of your attainments in this respect in the presence of a mixed assembly, where there were many who would not be edified, but, on the other hand, would be scandalized or offended by it: nor would it be proper to do so in conversation with scoffers, or cavilers, or any of the various classes of opposers of the doctrine of Christian perfection. And it is equally easy to see that it would be proper to give an account of your

experience of this blessing in select meetings of Christian brethren, and in conversation with such as are inquiring anxiously after the truth, and are prepared to listen to your relations with candor, and to profit by your experience. And this is all, perhaps, that it is necessary or would be proper for me to say upon this point. It will often require much wisdom to determine when to speak and when to keep silent upon the subject. This wisdom is to be gained by experience and observation, and he who has the most of it will be likely to render most service to the cause of holiness.

6. Endeavor to preserve a perfect consistency between your professions and practice.

You profess to love God with all your heart. Think, O think, what high expectations this profession raises in the church! If now you are unsteady in your religious course—if your life is defective in the savor of piety—if you are not always prepared to make great sacrifices, and to perform great labors, for the honor of Christ and the salvation of men—how sad will be the disappointment! Do not suppose that your personal enjoyments, be they ever so genuine, will be accepted instead of active zeal in all the great duties of religion. You must not live for yourselves alone: you must live for Christ—you must live for the church—you must live for the world. Christ, the church, and the world, unite in laying these claims, and in your professions of perfect love you acknowledge their equity.

7. Finally, I would urge that most necessary and salutary caution of St. Paul, "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

Upon this point I must beg your indulgence if I dwell a little longer than upon any of those which I have previously presented. It would certainly seem, from this language, that the apostle supposes it possible for appearances of evil to develop themselves when no evil is intended, or even suspected by us. Let us illustrate the subject by a few cases.

An undue devotion to business, extreme rigor in pressing our claims, and stinted contributions to benevolent objects, may result from our honest convictions of duty to our families, our creditors, and ourselves; but will often have the *appearance* of a worldly spirit, and of that covetousness which is idolatry. A boisterous manner in prosecuting a controversy, extreme sensitiveness under injuries, and great violence in opposing error or sin, may appear to us like the operations of a religious regard for truth, a proper and commendable self-respect, and a zeal for the cause of God; but to others all this may appear like the effervescence of unholy tempers—may look very much like the workings of angry passions. Our dress and equipage may seem to us only *decent* and *comfortable*; but to the great mass around us may appear like the fruits of pride. Our social habits may in our view be only such as are required by our social relations; but may appear to others to savor of a love of worldly and gay so-

ciety. Our manner and spirit may to us appear merely cheerful ; but to all others we may seem trifling. Or we may, on the other hand, design to be merely grave, reserved, and dignified in our manner ; but may appear to all besides, if not austere and scornful, yet sour, cold, and repulsive. We may value ourselves upon our character for plainness and primitive simplicity, when we appear to all persons of good taste, vulgar, coarse, and reckless of all the decencies of life. It is often said, I am a plain, old-fashioned man—I speak right out, just as I think. All very well, if this be not said to justify indelicate assaults upon the feelings of others, or a want of respect for the views and opinions of those who are entitled to respectful consideration and kind brotherly treatment. We may design to pour just contempt upon some absurd opinion or practice ; but may appear to all the world as making large efforts to display our own wit, or gratify feelings of personal revenge. We may seem to ourselves discharging an imperative duty in administering public reproof ; but our manner may savor more of censoriousness than of the spirit of brotherly love. We may cultivate a zealous manner in our religious exercises, and may be really ardent in our feelings and honest in all our expressions ; and yet we may appear to others to affect more than we feel—there may seem to be more sound than sense, more noise than spirit, in our religion.

But I forbear. Illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely, but I must give no more, lest

I should be tedious. I hope I shall not be misunderstood. I mean simply to illustrate and enforce the apostle's exhortation. And if it mean anything, it certainly puts an importance upon *appearances* which too many are unwilling to admit. If I have not entirely mistaken in the matter, we are here prohibited not only all real wrong-doing, but all appearances of wrong, either in practice or principle. If this be the right view of the subject, we are not at liberty to be entirely reckless as to the opinions which may be formed of our actions. It is not enough that our *motives* have been *good*. This would indeed be all that would be required if we were solitary beings—if we were not associated with other men, and constantly acting upon them, and contributing to form their character and habits. But as it is, we must take heed what impressions we make upon the minds around us.

The truth seems to be, that it is *the appearance of evil* that does the harm to society. If I perform an act which *appears* to all the world wrong, the goodness of my motives will not neutralize its influence upon the moral feelings of community. Should we ever, then, forget that "we are made a spectacle to the world?" Should we be entirely careless of public opinion? Should we think it a light thing that we have conducted ourselves so indiscreetly as to be misunderstood, and to have our motives impugned? All this evil may come upon us when we have done our very best. But even then

we should deeply regret it, and carefully and anxiously inquire whether the mischief may not have originated in some negligence on our part, and how the like evil is to be avoided in the future. Let us never forget, that if our actions, words, or spirit have "the appearance of evil," we are in all such cases inflicting a wound upon the moral feelings of others—our example is essentially injurious—and so far we are helping on the cause of sin and error! What an astounding consideration is this to a tender conscience! And shall we diligently labor to build up the cause of Christ with one hand, and pull it down with the other? Shall we, through our want of true Christian prudence, more than neutralize all our exertions in the cause of truth and holiness? God forbid. Will we suffer others with lower religious attainments to exert a better influence upon society? This would be truly lamentable. It would indeed be, in a sense, to hide our talent in the earth.

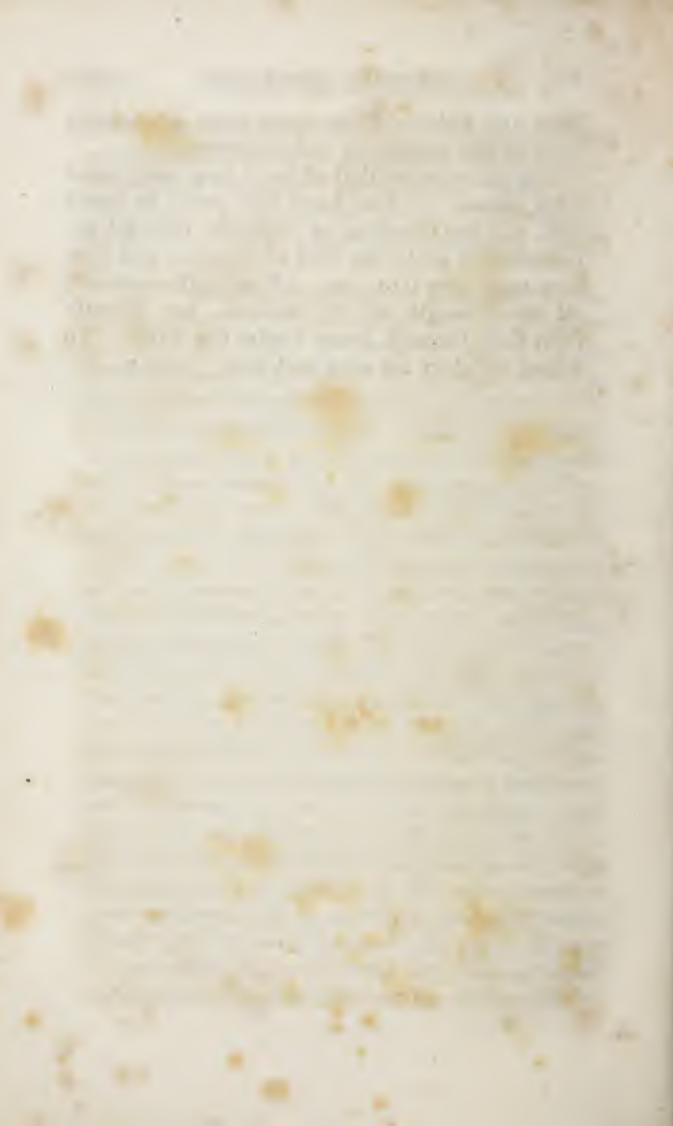
The good of society, the glory of God, and our own dearest interests call loudly upon us to heed this wise and always timely admonition. It comes home with peculiar force to those who have experienced the blessing of perfect love. You, dear brethren, of all others, should be without reproach—should keep your garments unspotted from the world. There should be a circumspection, a vigilance, an integrity, an uprightness of life that will always impress the beholder with respect for your character and professions. You should not only be *pure*, but

unsuspected. There should be no *appearances* which do not exactly correspond with the principles and feelings of your hearts. Upon your life, your actions, your words, your countenance, your spirit, should be inscribed, "Holiness to the Lord."

But should any inquire, how all this elevation of character and consistency of behavior are to be attained? I would answer, that one habit properly established will, with that constant divine aid which God has promised to the faithful, secure the object. *Only have always resting upon your heart a sense of the importance of the impressions you are making upon others.* This state of mind will lead you to a daily examination of yourself, and a strict scrutiny of your ways. And you will acquire a clearness of perception and an acuteness of discrimination as to what acts are in keeping with your high professions, which will save you from a multitude of errors, which, though small in themselves, are still blemishes in your character. All our faculties, both of body and mind, are improved by exercise. Exercising your moral sense, or, if you please, your conscience, will increase its power of discrimination: and hence, if we desire to acquire a tender and a discriminating conscience, we must task it with an abundance of labor. If we would have a clear spiritual vision, we must habitually exercise it upon minute objects—upon small matters—upon *appearances* of evil. Mr. Wesley says, "He that neglects little things shall fall by

little and little." How many have proved the truth of this maxim by sad experience !

But never forget that all your help must come from *above*. If you have the grace to avoid evil, and the wisdom to "abstain from all appearance of evil," the God of all grace and wisdom must give it to you. All our righteousness, all our strength, all our wisdom, are directly from God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. To whom be glory for ever and ever. AMEN.



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